

HISTORY OF BISHNUPUR-RAJ.

(An Ancient Kingdom of West Bengal)

BY

ABHAYA PADA MALLIK, B.A., B.T.,

Assistant Head Master, Bishenpur H. E. School
(Bankura.)

1921.

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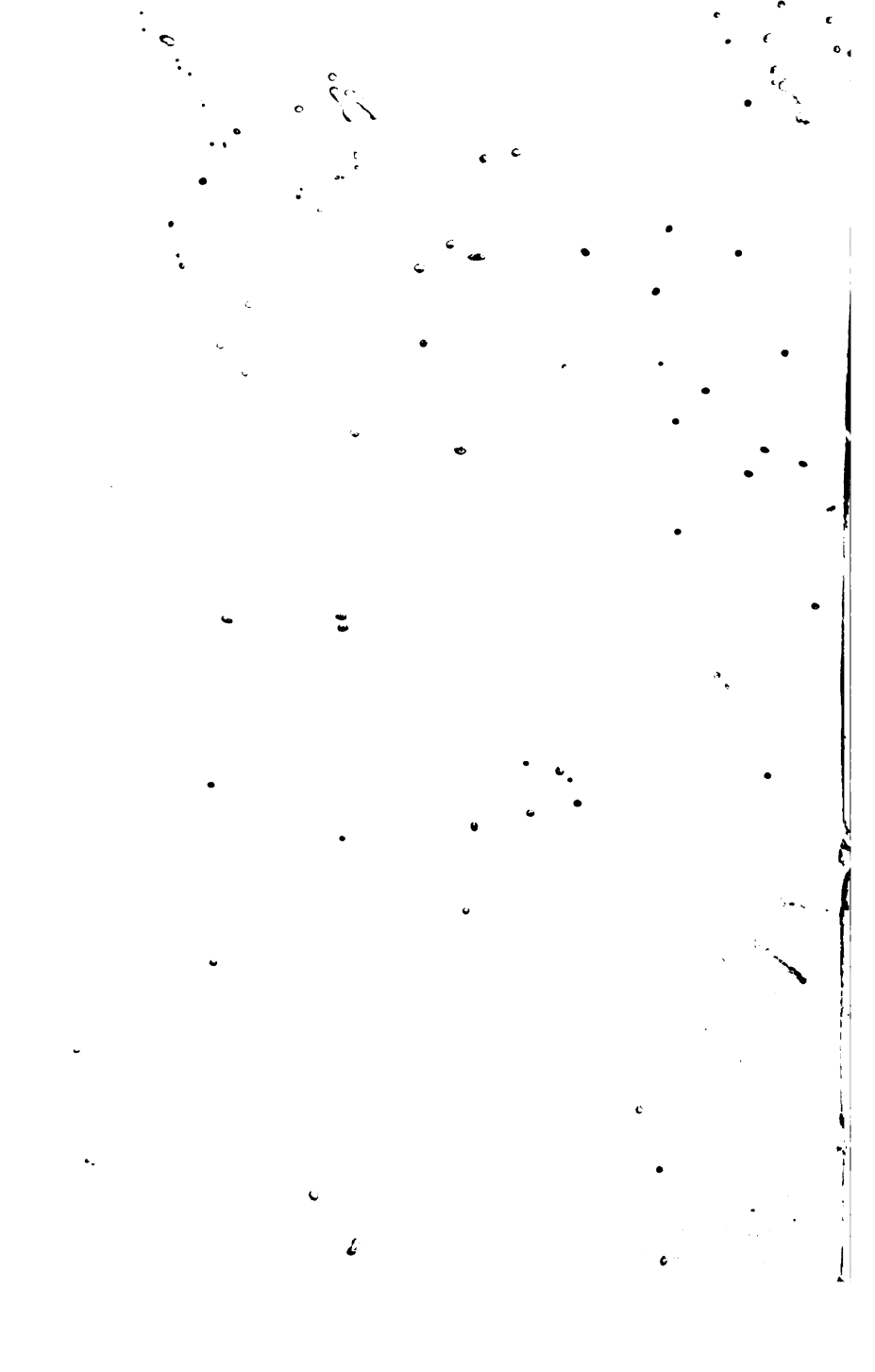
Bābu Jogendra Nath Singha Dev,

The noble minded Zamindar of Kuchiakole,

A descendant of the dynasty,

nearest to

The main line of Chaitanya Singha.



FOREWORD.

In teaching geography to pupils it is a good method to begin with the geography of their own village, and then to connect it with the geography of the world outside. It would be good to teach history, too, in the same way. From this view-point, I invite the attention of all educated persons in the district of Bankura, which comprises the greater portion of the ancient Mallabhoom, to this book. A thorough and accurate knowledge of geography and history is not a strong point either with ourselves or our children. Therefore, we, who are natives of Bankura, should read the book ourselves and make our children also read it.

But my appeal is not merely to the inhabitants of Bankura. The author tells us that "Mallabhoom in the days of its glory was an extensive country, equal in area to modern Wales." Wales is a small country, and yet its history is read by us and our children as part of the history of England. Smaller than Wales were some of the seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, jointly called the heptarchy, into which England was divided in days of yore. We had to read something about this heptarchy in our school days, and our children have to do it still, though it cannot be contended that these seven kingdoms had a very glorious history. It would be ridiculous even to suggest a comparison in point of importance and instructive-

ness between the history of Athens and the history of Mallabhoom. But as we are often apt to neglect the story of small areas, the reader may be reminded of the very small area of the state of Athens during some periods of her brilliant history, in order that it may be borne in mind that mere size is not everything. Even at present there are many very small states whose history is not negligible and many of which are members of the League of Nations.

In addition to the history of Mallabhoom, the author's account of its government and civilisation, its agriculture, commerce and industries, its architecture and music, its literary productions and system of education, its festivities, games, manners, customs and dress, is very interesting and instructive. It seems to us that the administrators of the district of Bankura may derive from the book some hints as to how the district may be made prosperous and happy; and for that reason the author deserves encouragement at the hands of the Bengal Government, too.

For one reason more, a history of Mallabhoom may be commended to the reader. It is that it has given birth to *Paramahansa* Ramakrishna, whose life and teachings have appealed to the world outside Bankura, the world outside Bengal, and the world outside India. It may not be impossible to find out from this book why it was in the fitness of things that he should have been born in Mallabhoom and not elsewhere.

January 18, 1921.

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

This book is intended to remove a long felt want of a history of Mallabhoom—whose kings reigned independently or semi-independently for over ten centuries, maintaining their position as powerful allies of the mighty Moguls and coping successfully with Pathan incursions and even baffling the attempts of the huge Marhatta hordes to subdue them. Their excellent administration and organised system of army and police were indeed praiseworthy; but their religious and moral development surpassed all their other achievements. But unfortunately no attempt has yet been made to write out a history of this region. The author has spared no pains in procuring authentic accounts as far as practicable and will feel that his time and energy has been properly employed if the readers find the book in any way useful to them.

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The 25th February, 1921.

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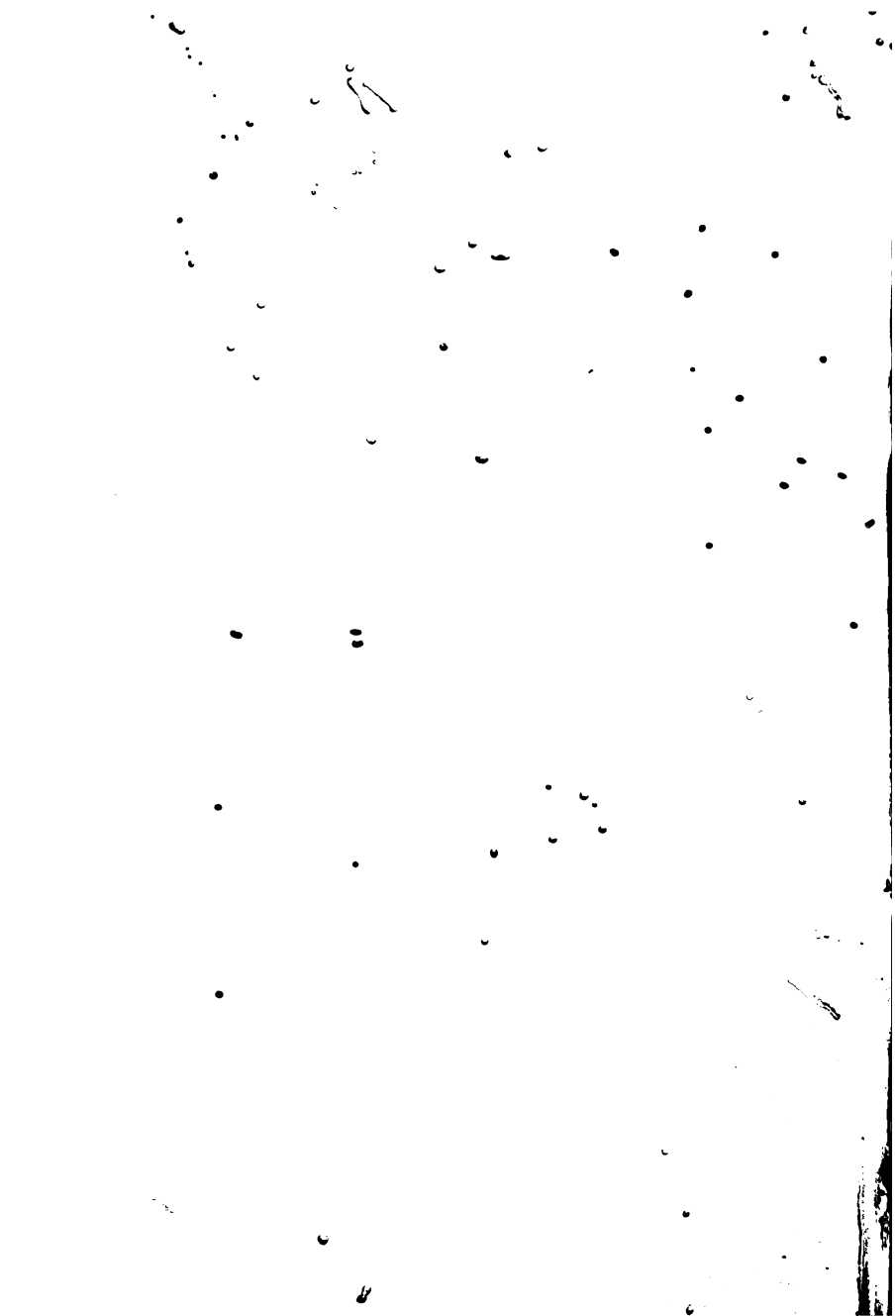
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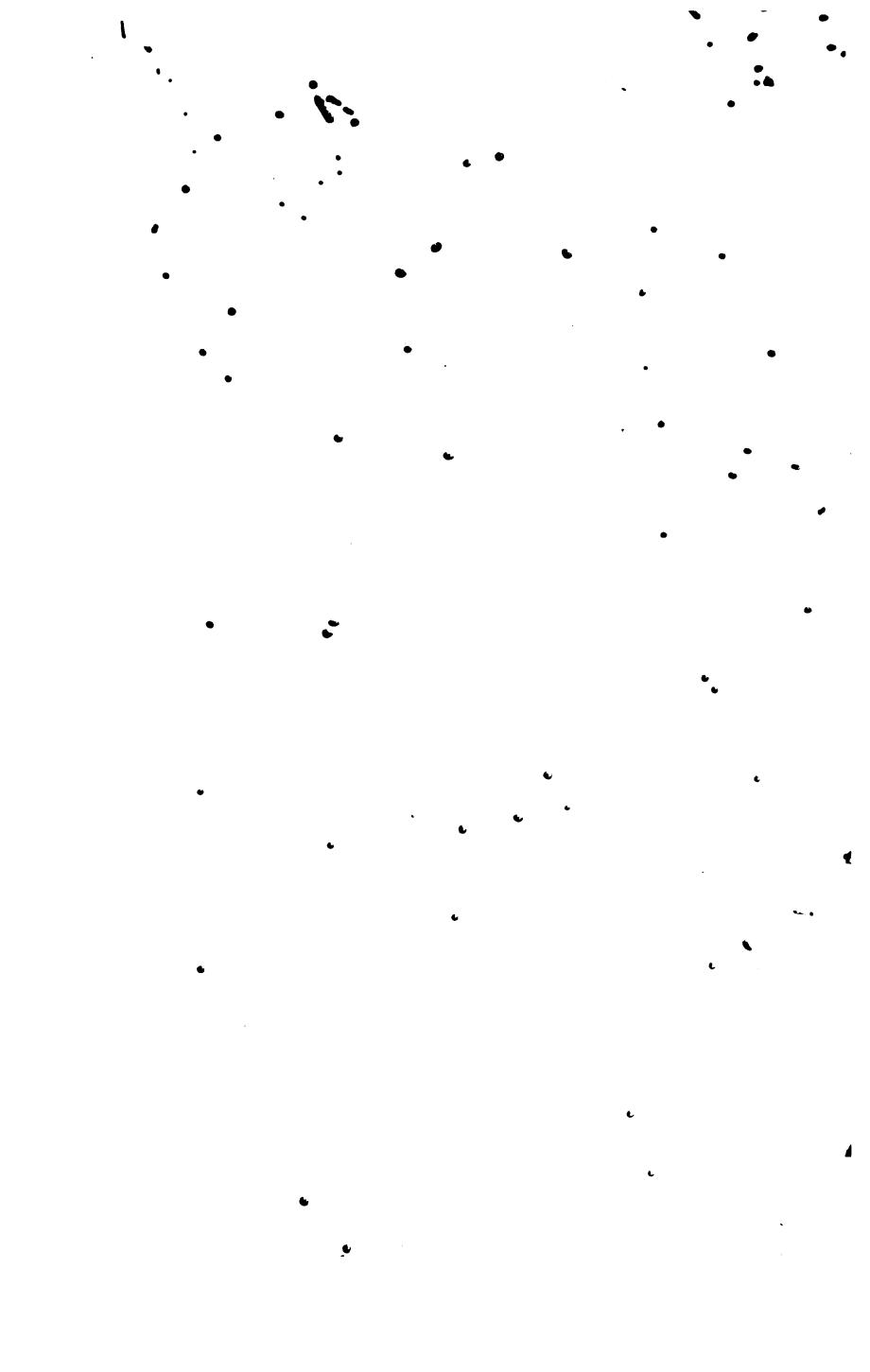
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HISTORY OF BISHNUPUR-RAJ.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND EARLY INHABITANTS.

Mallabhoom an old Country.—The country originally known as Mallabhoom or Mallabani (1) comprising the whole of the Bankura and parts of the neighbouring districts (with Bishnupur the capital in the centre), is as ancient as the days of the Mahābhārata (2). But Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador, states that during his time the mouth of the Ganges was only three hundred miles from Pataliputra (Modern Patna). It is also noted in the Rajatarangini (History of Kashmir) that during his invasion

(1) The name Mallabani (The world of the Mallas) betrays the vanity of the kings of the Age. Every king used to think that he was the lord of the whole world, though there were many hostile kings in the neighbourhood and his extensive kingdom—the whole world—could not boast of more than a few square miles.

(2) ततो गोपाल कच्छ सोत्तरानपि कीशलान् ।

मल्लानामधिपश्चैव पार्थिवश्चाजयत् प्रभुः ॥ ३ ॥

ततो मुद्गान् (राडान् इति नीलकण्ठः) प्रमुद्गांश्च स्वपञ्चानति वीर्यवान् ।

विजित्ययुधि कौन्तेयो मागधानभ्यधावली ॥ १६ ॥

(Savaparba, Thirtieth Chapter).

in the seventh century A.D., Lalitaditya (The King of Kashmir) found the ocean not far off from Goura (Modern Malda) (3). On the other hand, the writings of foreign travellers such as Ptolemy, Pliny, Fa-hiän, etc., clearly tell us that Tamralipta (Tomaletes, Taluntae, the modern Tamluk) and Burdwan (Partheles) (4) were in existence in their time. Now Mallabhoom, being on the western side of the line joining Burdwan and Tamluk, might have been in existence in the time of those foreign travellers. Moreover, an examination of the soil will bring to light that the laterite which abounds in Mallabhoom could not have been formed by the process of deltaic formation. It seems probable that the Bay of Bengal stretched in the north to some portion of the district of Murshidabad, and in the west to the borders of Bankura and Midnapur districts; and perhaps the districts of Faridpur, Nadia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Twenty-four-Paraganas were wholly or partly in the bed of the ocean (5). Thus it may be said with a certain amount of precision that Mallabhoom is an old country and has not been formed by deltaic deposits as in the case of Noakhali or Mesopotamia or lower Egypt. But

(3) বাঙ্গালার প্রাচীন ভূতত্ত্ব (ঐ. প্রকৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়।)

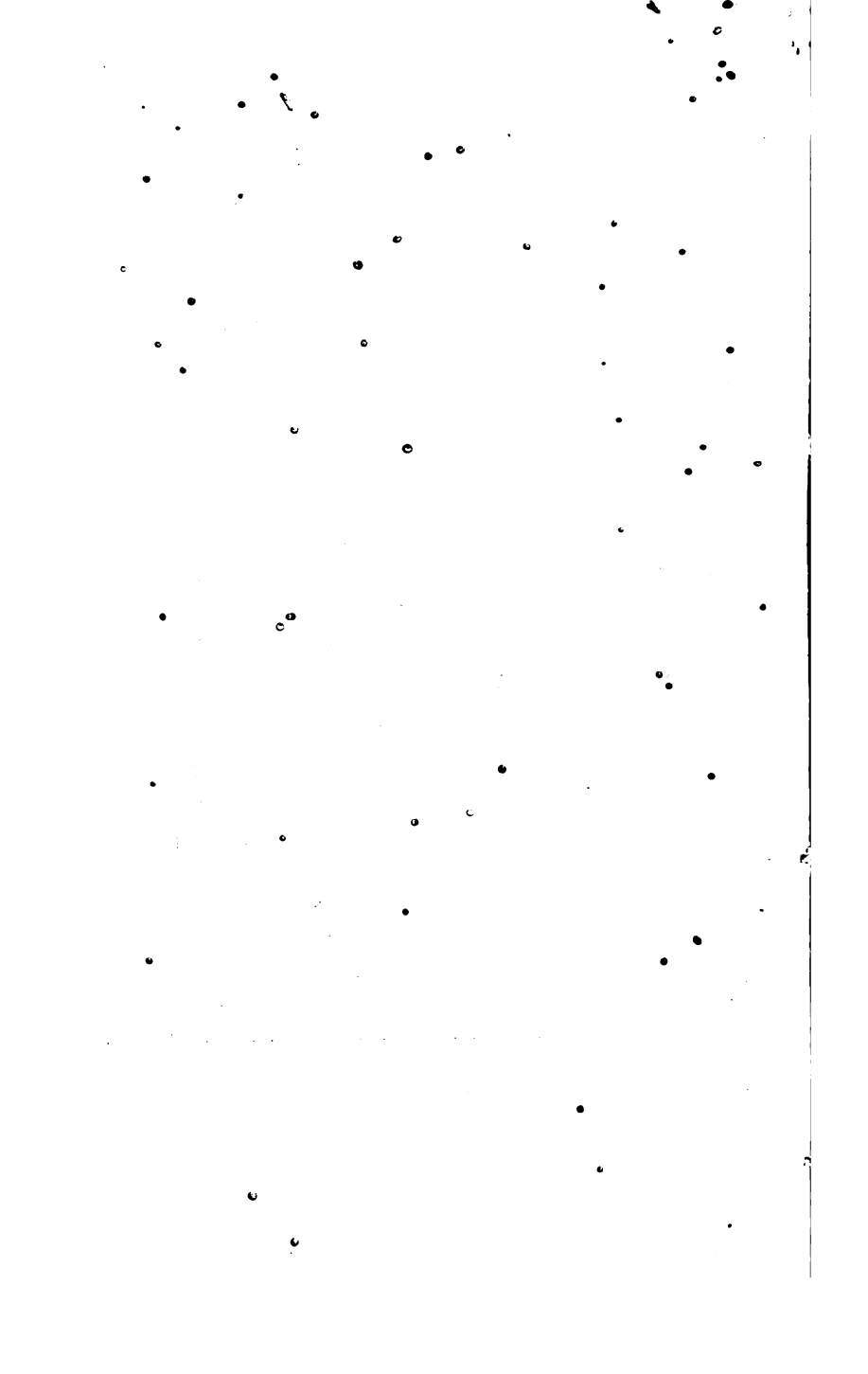
(4) We learn from Megasthenes that during the fourth century B. C., modern Orissa and a part of west Bengal was known as Kalinga. The king of Kalinga lived at Parthelis. Historians say that modern Burdwan was known as Parthelis at that time.

(প্রাচীন ভারত—ঐ. রামপ্রসাদ শঙ্কর।)

(5) Cf. বাঙ্গালার প্রাচীন ভূতত্ত্ব।

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the land-formation of the Ganges has not been without its effect on Mallabhoom. As the Bay of Bengal has continued to recede the hill-rivers of Mallabhoom have gradually dried up.

Boundary.—Mallabhoom in the days of its glory was an extensive country, equal in area to modern Wales (6). “To the north it is believed to have stretched as far as the modern Domin-i-koh in the Santhal Parganas; to the west it comprised part of Midnapur and to the east part of Burdwan; and the inscriptions found at Panchet in the Manbhoom district show that in the west it included part of Chota Nagpur” (7).

Hills and Rivers.—The country slopes gradually towards the east and north-east—This afforded the Mallas a great facility of making Bunds (embankments for the storage of water) for agriculture and defence. On the western side, there are a few hills, of which Susunja and Beharinath may be mentioned. Their height is about 1,500 feet. There are a number of hill-rivers, which are generally almost dry except in the rainy season. The Damodar is the largest. It is a sacred river of the aborigenes, like the Ganges of the Hindus. It is navigable in the rainy season only. The other rivers are the Darakeshwar,

(6) Bengal Manuscript Records (Hunter) p. 36.

(7) District Gazetteers Bankura, p. 21, where the authorities are—R. C. Dutt, W. B. Oldham, and Archaeological Survey reports. The above statement tallies with the tradition of the conquest of Khargapur and Chatna Barda by Malla kings.

Silai, Gandheswari, Kasai, Birai, etc. The hills and rivers of Mallabhoom are not of much importance now. They neither serve as natural barriers nor give facilities for trade and commerce. But from tradition as well as from innumerable carved stones and bricks (found in the walls of the temples) showing trading and fighting boats, we infer that in olden times (when the sea was not so far off as at present) the rivers were open to navigation.

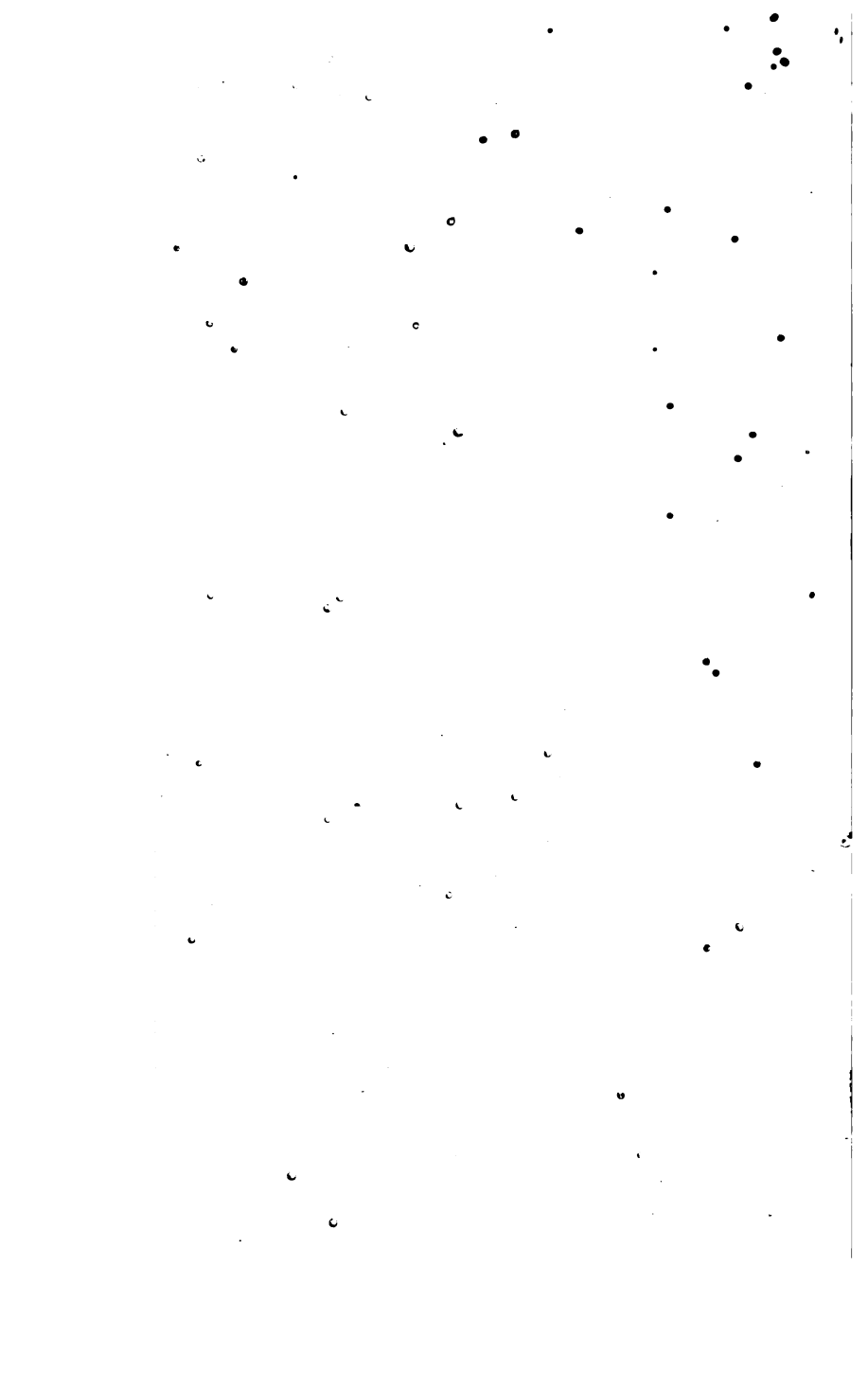
Forests.—The country was covered with dense forest; and even now there are wide stretches of low scrub jungle in many parts. The forests protected the Mallas from invasion and were the sources of a large and constant income. The forests besides growing timber produced lac, silk, wax and honey (8).

Roads.—Mallabhoom, being isolated especially on account of its dense forests, was not intimately connected with the other parts of Hindusthan. But the Mallas, having the Puri-road through their country, had constant touch with the Hindus of Northern India. If tradition is to be relied upon, it was through the pilgrims that the Malla dynasty (a Kshatriya dynasty, according to many authorities) was established in Mallabhoom. The constant traffic of the Aryan pilgrims probably led enter-

(8) "It is from this district that the East India Company were chiefly supplied with the articles of shellac"—Holwell's Interesting Historical events, (1765) p. 200. Silk—Even now Bishnupur produces raw as well as manufactured silk.



A BOAT WITH ARMED SOLDIERS (Jorabangla temple)



prising Aryans to settle by the Puri road (9). Also the art and science of the Aryans found their way to Mallabhoom through these pilgrims (10). The Goura-Brindaban road also passed through the borders of Mallabhoom. This road also did immense good to the Mallas. It was through this road that the light of Vaishnavism was first brought to Mallabhoom, as will be seen later on.

Early Inhabitants.—The original inhabitants of Mallabhoom, in all probability, belonged to the aboriginal stock of the Indian race. At the time of the Aryan migration, the most civilised class of the aborigenes, the Dravidians, took refuge in the outskirts of Bengal after driving away the Kolarians. The Aryans coming up to Allahabad did not proceed any farther in the eastern direction (11). Bengal was considered for many centuries an abominable country by the Aryans. During this period, the Dravidians enjoyed almost undisturbed peace in Bengal and

(9) This presumption quite agrees with the tradition that there were a number of Brahmans and Kshatriyas in the seventh century in Mallabhoom.

(10) The introduction of music by some musician pilgrims (in the reign of Shib Singha Malla) serves as an example.

(11) Thus says the Manusanhita (compiled between 200 B. C.—200 A. D. According to Buhler).

प्रवृत्तकलिषु सौराष्ट्रमगधेषु च ।
तीर्थयात्रां विना गच्छन् पुनः संस्कारमर्हति ॥

ruled their small independent kingdoms without any disturbance from outside (12).

Their Civilisation.—Regarding the civilisation of the Dravidians, the authorities differ greatly in their opinions. The Aryans out of spite called them many scornful nick-names (birds devoid of virtue and language) (13). But modern authorities point out that they were not very inferior to the Aryans in civilisation and achievements. Prof. Hall is of opinion that the Sumerians belonged to the same stock as the Dravidians (14). According to him the Dravidians had a civilisation of a high order. They knew agriculture and lived in towns; they

(12) The independent non-Aryan Kings of the delta of the Ganges mentioned in the Mahabharata.

सुखाशानधिपस्यैव ये च सागरवासिनः ।

सर्वान् क्षेत्रगणान्सर्वे विजिग्ये भरतर्षभः ॥ २५ ॥

एवं बहुविधान् देशान् विजित् पयनात्मजः ।

वसुदेवः उपादाय लौहिल्वमगमद्वली ॥ २६ ॥

स सर्वान् क्षेत्ररूपतीन् सागरानुपवासिनः ।

करमाहारयामास रत्नानि विविधानि च ॥ २७ ॥

(Savaparba, thirtieth Chapter).

(13) बाजानां इतिहास P. 19.—(क्षेत्राशाननाम वन्द्यापाद्याम् ।)

(14) "And it is to this Dravidian Ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerians bears most resemblance." Hall's Ancient History of the Near East—p. 173. Also E. B. Havell writes—"The result was not less remarkable because several of the non-Aryan elements, especially the Dravidian, made great intellectual contribution to the common fund" The History of the Aryan Rule in India. p. 32.

worshipped serpents—even to the present days the relics of their religion is found in the serpent-worship in Bengal (15); as also similar relics of the Kolarians are found in the hook-swinging festival and the worship of Marang-Baru (Baram) among the people of west Bengal and Orissa (16).—The Dravidians ruled in Bengal up to the time of the Aryan conquest. From the writings of Verselles we know that Bengal (Gangaridæ) was a civilised country in the first century B.C. (17). The exact date of the Aryan settlement in Bengal being unknown, it can not be ascertained whether that civilisation was Aryan or non-Aryan. But it may be inferred from the establishment of the Sudra Dynasties of the Nandas and Mauryas and from the rapid progress of the non-Brahmanical religions, Buddhism and Jainism, that during the early Buddhistic age the non-Aryans had a preponderating influence in West Bengal and Behar. Most probably the early civilisation of Bengal owed much to the non-Aryans; and as far as the history of an isolated country like Mallabhoom is concerned, we may reasonably say that the Dravidian element predominated not only in the civilisation, but to a great extent in the

(15) The story of Lakshmindra may be considered to indicate the admission of the aboriginal gods into the Aryan Pantheon.

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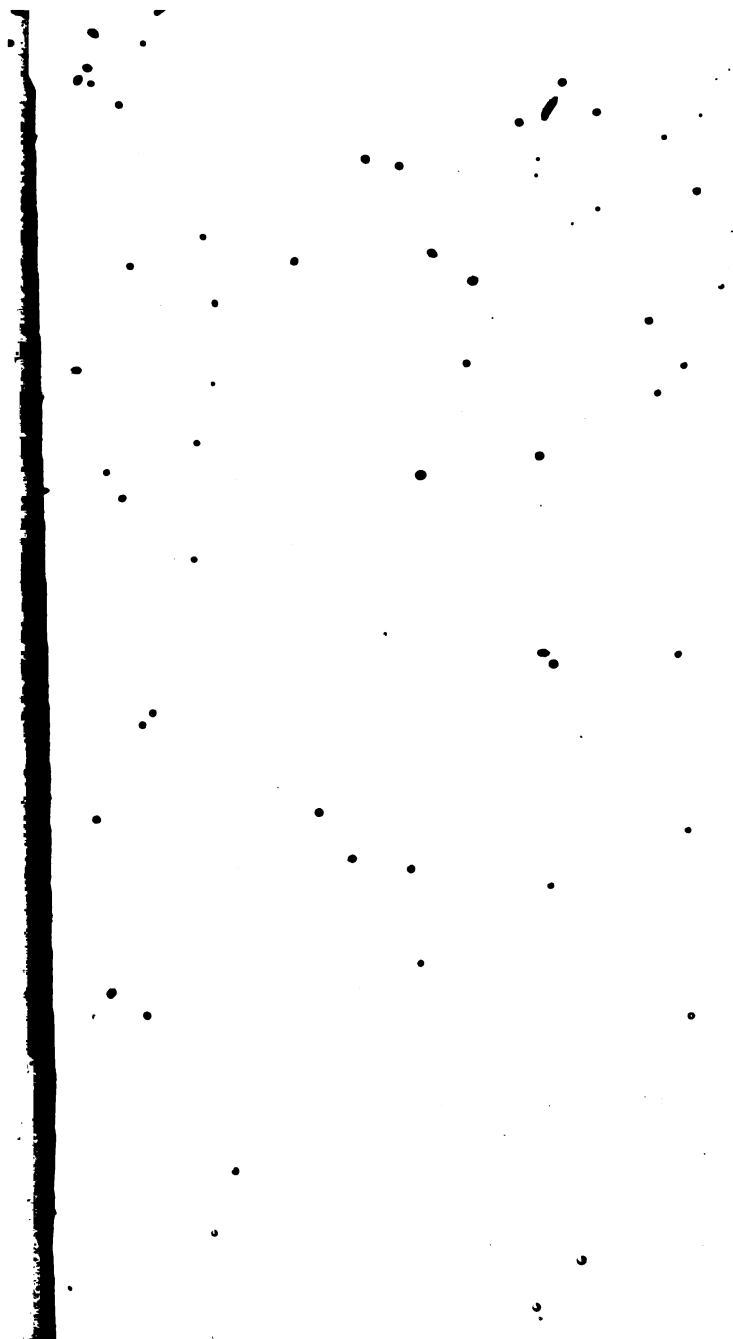
in the seventh century A.D., Lalitaditya (The King of Kashmir) found the ocean not far off from Goura (Modern Malda) (3). On the other hand, the writings of foreign travellers such as Ptolemy, Pliny, Fahian, etc., clearly tell us that Tamralipta (Tomaletes, Taluntae, the modern Tamluk) and Burdwan (Partheles) (4) were in existence in their time. Now Mallabhoom, being on the western side of the line joining Burdwan and Tamluk, might have been in existence in the time of those foreign travellers. Moreover, an examination of the soil will bring to light that the laterite which abounds in Mallabhoom could not have been formed by the process of deltaic formation. It seems probable that the Bay of Bengal stretched in the north to some portion of the district of Murshidabad, and in the west to the border of Bankura and Midnapur districts; and perhaps the districts of Faridpur, Nadia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Twenty-four-Paraganas were wholly or partly in the bed of the ocean (5). Thus it may be said with a certain amount of precision that Mallabhoom is an old country and has not been formed by deltaic deposits as in the case of Noakhali or Mesopotamia or lower Egypt. But

(3) বাঙ্গালার প্রাচীন ভূতত্ত্ব (ঐ. প্রকুরচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ।)

(4) We learn from Megasthenes that during the fourth century B. C., modern Orissa and a part of west Bengal was known as Kalinga. The king of Kalinga lived at Parthelia. Historians say that modern Burdwan was known as Parthelia at that time.

(প্রাচীন ভারত—ঐ. রামপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী ।)

(5) Cf. বাঙ্গালার প্রাচীন ভূতত্ত্ব ।



the land-formation of the Ganges has not been without its effect on Mallabhoom. As the Bay of Bengal has continued to recede the hill-rivers of Mallabhoom have gradually dried up.

Boundary.—Mallabhoom in the days of its glory was an extensive country, equal in area to modern Wales (6). “To the north it is believed to have stretched as far as the modern Domin-i-koh in the Santhal Parganas; to the west it comprised part of Midnapur and to the east part of Burdwan; and the inscriptions found at Panchet in the Manbhoom district show that in the west it included part of Chota Nagpur” (7).

Hills and Rivers.—The country slopes gradually towards the east and north-east—This afforded the Mallas a great facility of making Bunds (embankments for the storage of water) for agriculture and defence. On the western side, there are a few hills, of which Sasunja and Beharinath may be mentioned. Their height is about 1,500 feet. There are a number of hill-rivers, which are generally almost dry except in the rainy season. The Damodar is the largest. It is a sacred river of the aborigenes, like the Ganges of the Hindus. It is navigable in the rainy season only. The other rivers are the Darakeshwar,

(6) Bengal Manuscript Records (Hunter) p. 36.

(7) District Gazetteers Bankura, p. 21, where the authorities are—R. C. Dutt, W. B. Oldham, and Archaeological Survey reports. The above statement tallies with the tradition of the conquest of Khargapur and Chatna Barda by Malla kings.

Silai, Gandheswari, Kasai, Birai, etc. The hills and rivers of Mallabhoom are not of much importance now. They neither serve as natural barriers nor give facilities for trade and commerce. But from tradition as well as from innumerable carved stones and bricks (found in the walls of the temples) showing trading and fighting boats we infer that in olden times (when the sea was not so far off as at present) the rivers were open to navigation.

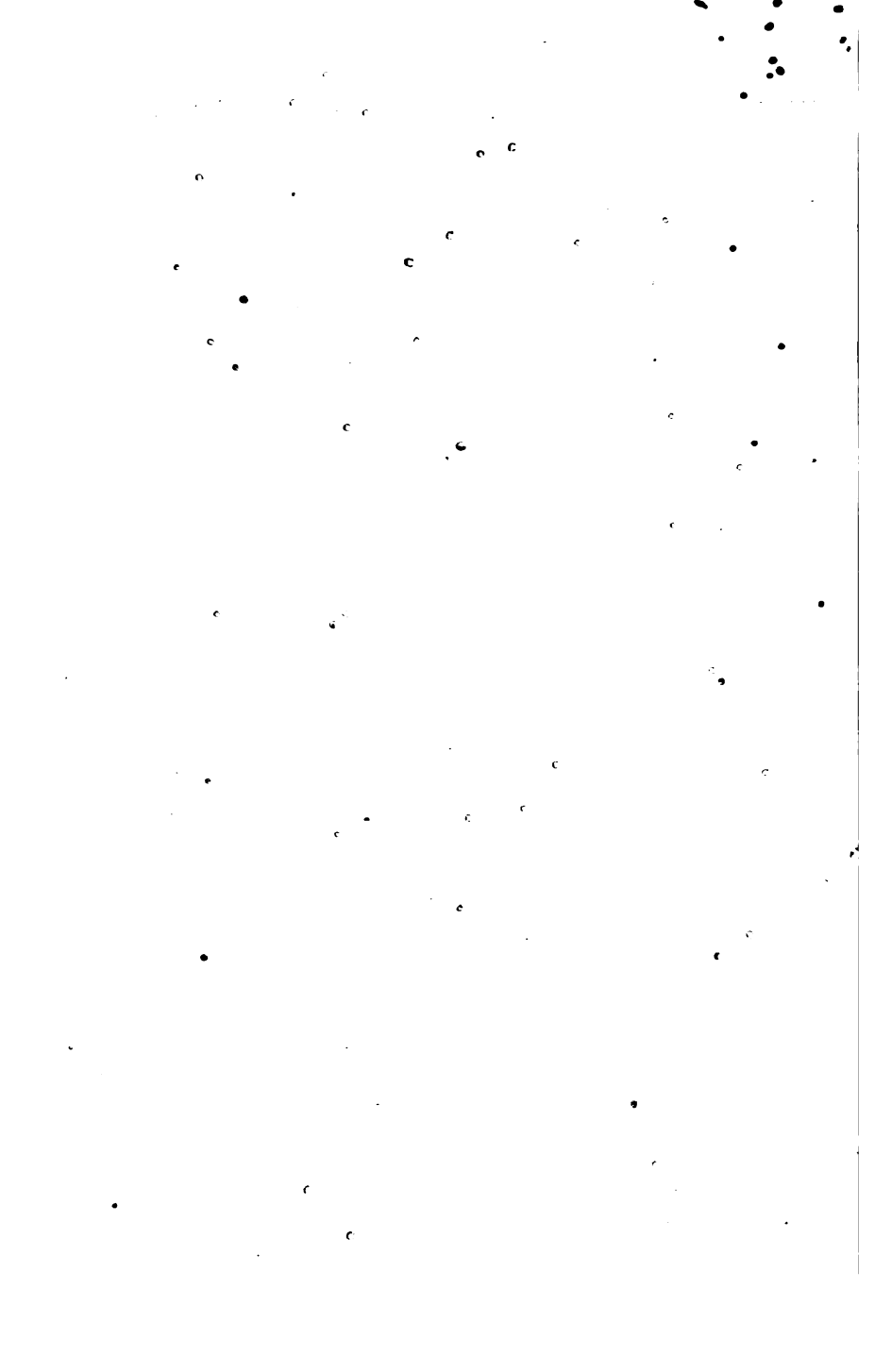
Forests.—The country was covered with dense forest; and even now there are wide stretches of low scrub jungle in many parts. The forests protected the Mallas from invasion and were the sources of a large and constant income. The forests besides growing timber produced lac, silk, wax and honey (8).

Roads.—Mallabhoom, being isolated especially on account of its dense forests, was not intimately connected with the other parts of Hindusthan. But the Mallas, having the Puri-road through their country, had constant touch with the Hindus of Northern India. If tradition is to be relied upon, it was through the pilgrims that the Malla dynasty (a Kshatriya dynasty, according to many authorities) was established in Mallabhoom. The constant traffic of the Aryan pilgrims probably led enter-

(8) "It is from this district that the East India Company were chiefly supplied with the articles of shellac"—Holwell's Interesting Historical events, (1765) p. 200. Silk—Even now Bishnupur produces raw as well as manufactured silk.



A BOAT WITH ARMED SOLDIERS (Jorabangla temple)



prising Aryans to settle by the Puri road (9). Also the art and science of the Aryans found their way to Mallabhoom through these pilgrims (10). The Goura-Brindaban road also passed through the borders of Mallabhoom. This road also did immense good to the Mallas. It was through this road that the light of Vaishnavism was first brought to Mallabhoom, as will be seen later on.

Early Inhabitants.—The original inhabitants of Mallabhoom, in all probability, belonged to the aboriginal stock of the Indian race. At the time of the Aryan migration, the most civilised class of the aborigenes, the Dravidians, took refuge in the outskirts of Bengal after driving away the Kolarians. The Aryans coming up to Allahabad did not proceed any farther in the eastern direction (11). Bengal was considered for many centuries an abominable country by the Aryans. During this period, the Dravidians enjoyed almost undisturbed peace in Bengal and

(9) This presumption quite agrees with the tradition that there were a number of Brahmans and Kshatriyas in the seventh century in Mallabhoom.

(10) The introduction of music by some musician pilgrims (in the reign of Shib Singha Malla) serves as an example.

(11) Thus says the Manusanhita (compiled between 200 B. C.—200 A. D. According to Buhler).

प्रह्वयकलिङ्गेषु सीराद्रमगधेषु च ।
तीर्थयात्री बिना गच्छन् पुनः संस्कारमर्हति ॥

ruled their small independent kingdoms without any disturbance from outside (12).

Their Civilisation.—Regarding the civilisation of the Dravidians, the authorities differ greatly in their opinions. The Aryans out of spite called them many scornful nick-names (birds devoid of virtue and language) (13). But modern authorities point out that they were not very inferior to the Aryans in civilisation and achievements. Prof. Hall is of opinion that the Sumerians belonged to the same stock as the Dravidians (14). According to him the Dravidians had a civilisation of a high order. They knew agriculture and lived in towns; they

(12) The independent non-Aryan Kings of the delta of the Ganges mentioned in the Mahabharata.

सुखाशानधिपश्चैव ये च सागरवासिनः ।

सर्वान् क्षेत्रगणेश्वैव विजित्य भैरतर्षभः ॥ २५ ॥

एवं बहुविधान् देशान् विजित् पवनात्मजः ।

वसुतेभ्यः उत्पादाय सौहित्यमगमदसौ ॥ २६ ॥

स सर्वान् क्षेत्रपतॄन् सागरानुपवासिनः ।

करमाहास्यामास रत्नानि विविधानि च ॥ २७ ॥

(Savaparba, thirtieth Chapter).

(13) बाङ्गाल इतिहास P. 19.—(ब्राह्मणद्वय बन्ध्यापाश्याय ।)

(14) "And it is to this Dravidian Ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerians bears most resemblance." Hall's Ancient History of the Near East—p. 173. Also E. B. Havell writes—"The result was not less remarkable because several of the non-Aryan elements, especially the Dravidian, made great intellectual contribution to the common fund" The History of the Aryan Rule in India. p. 32.

worshipped serpents—even to the present days the relics of their religion is found in the serpent-worship in Bengal (15); as also similar relics of the Kolarians are found in the hook-swinging festival and the worship of Marang-Baru (Baram) among the people of west Bengal and Orissa (16).—The Dravidians ruled in Bengal up to the time of the Aryan conquest. From the writings of Verselles we know that Bengal (Gangaridæ) was a civilised country in the first century B.C. (17). The exact date of the Aryan settlement in Bengal being unknown, it can not be ascertained whether that civilisation was Aryan or non-Aryan. But it may be inferred from the establishment of the Sudra Dynasties of the Nandas and Mauryas and from the rapid progress of the non-Brahmanical religions, Buddhism and Jainism, that during the early Buddhistic age the non-Aryans had a preponderating influence in West Bengal and Behar. Most probably the early civilisation of Bengal owed much to the non-Aryans; and as far as the history of an isolated country like Mallabhoom is concerned, we may reasonably say that the Dravidian element predominated not only in the civilisation, but to a great extent in the

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population also—as will be more clearly seen on a craniological survey. The only instances of Early Aryan intervention known to history may, for the sake of brevity, be summarily given as follows:—

1. Asoka's conquest of Kalinga (which included Mallabhoom) and its partial depopulation in the third century B. C.

2. Chandra Barma, King of Malwa, invaded Mallabhoom in the fifth century A. D. [As Susunia Inscriptions (discovered by N. N. Basu) and H. P. Sastri's article (in the Indian Antiquary) show.]

3. Samudra Gupta's conquest in the fourth century A. D.

4. Rarha (which includes Mallabhoom) was under the sovereignty of Shashanka, the king of Karnad Subarna (Kelona—Sufalana of Hieun Tsang) who was a contemporary of Harshabardhan in the seventh century, A. D.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY MALLA AGE.

Adi Malja—His Parentage.—Tradition and fragmentary records of the Raj-family tell us that Raghunath, Adi Malla, founded the Malla dynasty in the year 695 A. D. The Malla era dates from this year. It is said that Raghunath was a son of the Kshatriya Raja (Rundel family) of Joynagar (Ranth Bhramar Garh) near Brindaban. The deposed Raja and the queen were on their way to Puri on pilgrimage. The queen was pregnant and was about to give birth to a child when they were near the old site of Kotalpur. They arrived at a village called Lougram (6 miles from Kotalpur) and there the Raja placed his wife under the care of a Brahman named Manahar Panchanan and a Kayastha named Bhagirath Guha. He also left his sword named Joysankar for the protection of his wife. Then the Raja hurriedly proceeded towards his destination, never to return (1). The queen gave birth to a son who was named Raghunath and died a few days after her delivery. Raghunath was placed under the care of a Bagty

(1) It is said that his haste was due his "religious madness"—not very uncommon among the pilgrims, especially as the Rathajatra festival was drawing very near. At Puri he was attacked with cholera and expired.

mother till he attained his boyhood (2). Then the boy lived with the sons of Manahar Panchanan under the same roof and had his education with them in the same institution. He grew up strong in physique; and in the course of a few years became such a wrestler that there was no match for him in the whole neighbourhood. Thus he was called the first wrestler or Adi Malla (3). There is also a story about a serpent raising its hood over his head to protect him from the sun when fast asleep after the labour of tending cows in the forest. Such auguries of imperial greatness are not wanting in the annals of other Kings also. Hindu Mythology gives plenty of instances of kings raised to the imperial dignity through the superior instincts of snakes, elephants, etc.

Such is the information that can be procured from tradition and the records of the Bishnupur Raj-family about the parentage of Raghunath Adi Malla. It is not beyond doubt that there were so many Brahmins and even a Kayastha of the Guha-title in the locality of Mallabhoom in the seventh century. What we can possibly infer from history is that the first Kayastha of Guha-title that ever came to Bengal was Dasarathi Guha, one of the five attendant Kayasthas of the five Brahmins brought by Adi Sur to Bengal. As the matter stands it

(2) Thus there is a tradition that the Rajas of Bishnupur are Bagties by caste.

(3) He might have been named Adi Malla because he founded the Malla dynasty.

is not definitely known that the story of the parentage of Adi Malla has not been fabricated by the later Malla kings in order to connect themselves by blood with the Kshatriyas of northern India. Thus Mr. R. C. Dutt writes:—"The fact that the Rajas of Bishnupur called themselves Mallas (an aboriginal title) (4) for many centuries before they assumed the Kshattriya title of Singh, the fact that down to the present day they are known as Bagdi Rajas all over Bengal, as well as numerous local facts and circumstances—all go to prove that the Rajas of Bishnupur are Kshattriyas, because of their long independence and their past history, and not by descent. The story of descent is legendary, but the Kshattriyas of Bishnupur can show the same letters patent for their Kshattriyahood as the Rajputs of Northern India or the original Kshattriyas of India could show, viz., military profession and the exercise of royal powers for centuries."

Establishment of His Kingdom.—It has been already seen that Raghunath became the first wrestler in the locality of Laugram. His fame reached far and wide, and at last drew the attention of Nrsingha Deb—the then reigning king of Praddumnapur, about 16 miles west of Laugram. It is said that on one occasion Raghunath attended a shraddh ceremony held by the Praddumna-Raja, His excellent appearance

(4) It is not clear why Mr. R. C. Dutt considers "Malla" as an aboriginal title. We find plenty of uses of the word Malla in Sanskrit books and it means a wrestler.

drew the attention of all around him. The Raja saw signs of imperial greatness in his appearance and invested him with the insignia of Rajaship. Thus he was soon raised to the status of a petty king of Laugram and six other adjoining villages. An opportunity to extend his small principality soon presented itself. Pratap-narayana the chief of Jatbihar (within the jurisdiction of Indus Thana) became rebellious. Adi Malla was engaged by the Raja of Praddumnapur to quell the rebellion. He succeeded in defeating the rebels and was allowed by the Raja to add Jatbihar to his principality. In this way he increased his power and prestige in the locality of the old sites of Kotalpur and Indus and went on reigning with the advice of his ministers of the family of Bhagirath Guha (5).

Adi Malla married Chandrakumari, who is said to have belonged to a Kshatriya family. He had four sons, the eldest of whom was Joy Malla. He is said to have built the temple of Dandeswari in the place where the serpent raised its hood over his head. It is also stated in local tradition that the Raja brought from Joynagar (near Brindaban) his father's friends and relations to Mallabhoom when he ascended the throne as a petty king. He had a priest of the family of Panchanan and even now the present priests of the Mallas, the Maha-

(5) The Ray family of Baliatore (Bankura), who were the Dewans of the Malla Rajas till recent times, is said to have descended from Bhagirath Guha.

patra family of Bishnupur, claim descent from Panchanan.

Joy Malla.—Adi Malla died in 709 A. D. and was succeeded by his son Joy Malla. Joy Malla inherited the bravery and military skill of his father. During the 'early years of' his reign he was on friendly terms with the Praddumna-Raj, the lord paramount of the locality. But the gradual increase of his power caused the Raja of Praddumnapur to be seized with panic and he resolved to put him down. Thus a quarrel arose. Joy Malla's promptness saved him from destruction. He at once laid siege to the fort of Praddumnapur and at last succeeded in reducing it. The Praddumna-Raj with his family drowned themselves in the waters of Kanai-Shayer (still extant). Some say that Joy Malla got possession of the fort of Praddumnapur by treachery. Joy Malla made Praddumnapur his capital and following an ancient Hindu custom, celebrated the coronation ceremony by worshipping the flag of Indra, the Jupiter of the Hindu Pantheon—a custom, which prevails to this day at Bishnupur, the occasion being marked by large festive gatherings of Santals, with whose aid Joy Malla is said to have vanquished his adversary.

Then a long list of kings ascended the throne in succession (6). Of them the fourth king, Kallu Malla, defeated the neighbouring chief of Indrahast (Indus) and

(6) A list of kings is to be seen in the appendix.

annexed his kingdom. The sixth king of the line conquered Kakta. The eighth Sura Malla subdued the king of Bagri (now a paraganā in the north of Midnapur). The twelfth king, Kharga Malla, annexed the site of Khargapur which was named after him.

Jagat Malla.—The nineteenth king of the dynasty, Jagat Malla, deserves special mention. He is said to have removed his capital from Praddumnapur to Bishnupur. The story says that once he came a hunting to the site of modern Bishnupur, which was then covered with dense forest. To the utter surprise of the Raja he found that one of his hunting hawks was constantly being driven off by a heron sitting on the branch of a tree. The Raja thought that, that was due to some mysterious defensive strength of the place. Thus he made up his mind to make this place the capital of his kingdom. He is said to have built the town of Bishnupur in such a magnificent way that "Bishnupur was the most renowned city in the world and it became more beautiful than the beautified house of Indra in heaven. The buildings were of pure white stones. Within the walls of the palace were theatres, embellished rooms, dwelling houses and dressing rooms. There were also houses for elephants, barracks for soldiers, store houses, armouries, a treasury and a temple It was during his reign that a number of merchants established themselves in the city." (7)

(7) Hunter's Bural Bengal Appendix C.

It is not definitely known under whom Bishnupur became the capital. Even in tradition there are differences of opinions. Some say that Adi Malla made Bishnupur his capital; others attribute it to his son Jagat Malla. Again others are of opinion that the capital was not removed to Bishnupur earlier than the time of Jagat Malla. It also seems to us that the capital at Bishnupur could not have been established so early as the days of Adi Malla or Jagat Malla, that is, about twelve hundred years ago. We find no remains at or near Bishnupur dating from earlier than the 14th century (8). We are rather inclined to believe that the capital at Bishnupur was not established much earlier than the 14th century. Then arises another doubt as to the decoration of the city at Bishnupur with "buildings of pure white stones." Neither at Mallabhoom, nor in the neighbouring countries, can a quarry be found from which pure white stones could be procured. Moreover at that time such stones could not have been easily imported owing to the want of proper roads and conveyances. We find no trace of pure white stones even in the oldest ruins of the temples and palaces, to say nothing of other buildings. The pure white stones were undoubtedly an exaggeration. If there had been any thing of the kind they would have been the ordinary Susunia tiles (semi-white rough stones found in the neighbouring hills of Susunia). But un-

(8) The temple of Sandeswar was built by Prithi Malla in 641 M. E. 1335 A.D.

fortunately no trace of even such stones has yet been discovered in any of the remains still extant.

Jagat Malla reigned for thirteen years. He married a Kshatriya princess and had three sons. Ramai Pandit, the author of Shunya-Puran and the propagator of the worship of Buddha under the guise of Dharma, flourished in his time in a village near the site of modern Moinapur (near Joypur). Modern research lays great stress on the works of Ramai Pandit, who was regarded as a saint in Dharmapal's time as will be seen in detail later on.

Rama Malla.—After Jagat Malla, the next notable king was Rama Malla. Rama Malla reigned in the thirteenth century. "In his reign the fort was improved and various sorts of foreigners were brought into it. A governor was appointed with orders to prepare uniforms for the army. The soldiers learned the use of arms more perfectly and the high renown they bore was sufficient to strike terror even into the hearts of the giant race. In his reign no foreign prince ventured to attack Bishnupur.

Shib Singha Malla.—Rama Malla died after reigning twenty-three years. After him the next notable king was Shib Singha Malla. During his reign the town of Bishnupur became a great centre of music. Even to the present day, such renowned musicians as Prof. Radhika Prosad Goswami, Babus Rama Prasanna Banerji, Gopeswar Banerji and others preserve the great name of Bishnupur as will be seen more elaborately later on.

Civillisation.—The civilisation of Mallabhoom in this early Malla period was most probably merely rudimentary in character. We can not find any trace of coins, though Mallabhoom was reputed to be an independent principality. No monument of civilisation, in the shape of architecture or fine arts, has yet been brought to light. We only hear that there were some old paintings which have been all destroyed. The old dresses and utensils can not be had now as, owing to a noble and benevolent custom of the Mallas (but indeed a very hard custom for the poor historians), they were made over to the drummers and musicians, etc., on the occasion of the birth of the princes. Thus we can have no idea about the industries, dresses, and fine arts of the Mallas. We know but little of the manners and customs of the Mallas of this age. The only noteworthy fact that comes within the range of our knowledge is the Dharma Puja of Ramai Pandit, and we shall deal with it in detail as far as we can, in the light of modern research.

Ramai Pandit.—According to the Dharmamangal of Ghanaram, Ramai Pandit was a Bagty by caste and lived by the side of a river at a place named Champai. He was regarded as a great saint in Dharmapal's time. It was at his hermitage that Ranjabati obtained a boon which led to the birth of her son, Lausen the great propagandist of Dharma religion. According to Mahamahopadhyaya H. P. Sastri, almost every village west of the river Hughli

had one or two places of Dharma worship at that time. Ramai Pandit was regarded as the first great priest of Dharma worship. His Paddhati was followed in many parts of Bengal.

Buddhism.—Buddhism, in the guise of Dharma worship, had a great following in Bengal and even now many remnants are to be found in villages. Ramai Pandit, who flourished in Mallabhoom, must have succeeded in propagating his religion in his native soil and we are inclined to believe that before the introduction of Vaishnavism, Mallabhoom was a stronghold of Dharma worship. We cannot say for certain what kinds of people were the followers of this religion and whether the Malla kings (who according to tradition were sometimes reputed to be Bagty by caste) took part in it. But as the matter stands we are inclined to conclude that, to say nothing of Bagties, Hardies and other low castes, Dharma was worshipped more or less by weavers, blacksmiths, etc.; and even high-class Hindus sometimes offered Manath (articles of worship given to the gods in return for the fulfilment of desires). They continue to do so even to the present day.

Now let us consider the remains of Dharma worship that are still to be found at or near Bishnupur.

1. Briddhyaksha (Bura Dharma) at Bishnupur Sankari Bazar, worshipped by a family of blacksmiths who hold a special ceremony of wearing copper bangles.

2. Rupa Narayana (the tortoise-incarnation), worshipped by a weaver family at Indus.

3. Naba Jiban, worshipped by a potter family at Balsi.

There are many others, *e.g.*, Bankura Rai of Baital, Panchanan of Parasa, Andharkuli of Joypur, Sarup Narayana of Gavapur, etc.

The above list clearly shows how Dharma was universally worshipped in the early Malla period, when Ramai Pandit was living and Vaishnavism had not been introduced.

Some quotations from the Paddhati of Ramai Pandit will show the spirit of Dharma Puja, as well as present specimens of the language then used in Mallabhoom.

Dharma decries the sacrifice and Mārkaṇḍa Muni (Sage) greatly suffers for showing disrespect to Kapila (Buddha or Dharma)—

ওঁ শোল সহস্র গতিলয়ে ঐরমাই পণ্ডিত ধর্মপূজা করিবারে যান

সেই পথ দিয়া ঋষি মুনিমার্কণ্ডযান

ধূপেধূনায় ধর্মঘর দেখিবারে পান ॥

কহেন মার্কণ্ডমুনি, শুন হে কপিলমুনি

কিসের শুনি জয় জয়কার ।

বলে মিথ্যাই আলম চাঁদা, মিথ্যাই বাজনা বাজে

মিথ্যাই ধর্ম উজ্জল ।

ধর্মরাজ যজ্ঞ নিন্দা করে মুনিমার্কণ্ড যান

অর বলি বোধ হয় ঋষি মুনির গায় ।

অষ্টকুট চেলি শূলব্যাধি মুনিমার্কণ্ড স্থান ।

আদ্যের ধবল দিল মুনির মুখেতে জাঁতিয়ে ।

রমাই পণ্ডিত বলে মধুর পূর্ণি দিবে পিঠের জাকাল ।

মধুমাংসে এ ঘর করিবে একাকার ।

গতি ভকতের উচ্ছিষ্ট মুনিকুড়ায় খাবে ।

ভাবত মার্কণ্ডমুনি অমর পদ পাবে ।

In another book of Ramai Pandit, named the Shunya Puran, which is considered to be one of the oldest Bengali books as yet discovered, we find the Creation out of nothing described :—

নাইরেক নাহি রূপ নাহি ছিল বর্ণচিহ্ন ।

রবি শশী নাই ছিল নাই রাত্রি দিন ।

নাই ছিল জলস্থল নাই ছিল আকাশ ।

মেরু মন্দার না ছিল না ছিল কৈলাস ।

দেবতা দেহারা নাই পূজিবার দেহ ।

মহাশূন্তমধ্যে প্রভু আর আছে কেহ ।

ঋষি যে তপস্বী নাই নাইক ব্রাহ্মণ ।

পর্বত পাহাড় নাই নাইক স্থাবর জঙ্গম ।

পুণ্ড্রস্থল নাই ছিল নাই গঙ্গাজল ।

সাগর সঙ্গম নাই দেবতা সকল ।

নাই সৃষ্টি ছিল আর নাই সুর নর ।

ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু না ছিল না ছিল আঁধার ।

বার ব্রত না ছিল ঋষি তপস্বী ।

তীর্থস্থল নাহি ছিল গয়া বারানসী ।

প্রয়াগ মাধব নাই কি করি বিচার ।

স্বর্গমর্ত নাই ছিল সবধুন্ধকার ।

দশদিকপাল নাই মেঘতারাগণ ।

আয়ু যত্ন নাই ছিল যমের তাড়ন ।

চারি বেদ নাই ছিল শাস্ত্রের বিচার ।

শূণ্যবেদ করিলেন প্রভু করতায় ।

ঐশ্বর্যচরনারবিন্দ করিয়া প্রণতি ।

ঐযুত রমাই কয় শুনরে ভারতী ।

The quotation given below points to the Buddhist Shunyamurti of Dharma. The Hindus never believed in Shunya as the origin of the world, while Shunya and Mahashunya are the great goals of the Buddhist religion.

যস্যাকৌ নাহিমখ্যৌ ন চ করতরশ্চ নাস্তিকায়োনীনাৎ:

নাকারৌ নৈবব্যপ্য ন চ ভয়মবহৌ নাস্তি জন্মানিয়ম্ ।

যোগীন্দ্রৈ ধ্যানগম্যং সকলজলময়ং সর্বলোকৈকগাথম্

মক্তান্য কামপুরং সুবলববদং চিন্তয়েৎ যশস্মৃতিং ॥

The paraphernalia of worship was taken from the Brahmins as a rule. There is a meditation on the deity; the bathing of the deity, the offering of flowers, edibles, water and sandal paste; oil and vermilion form the only exceptions. The formula of worship was sometimes in Bengali and sometimes in Sanskrit, both equally ungrammatical, as will be seen from the above quotations. Goats, hogs, ducks and fowls are often sacrificed before the deity. Hindus, nay, even the worshippers of the deity themselves, believe that he is either a form of Vishnu or a form of Shiva. But in their books he is much above them.

Dharma is worshipped under various names and

some of them have already been included in the Hindu Pantheon as one of the various forms of either Shiva or Vishnu. Some idea of the number of Dharma worshippers may be formed from the fact that in almost every village in central and west Bengal there are some places dedicated to Dharma where all the low but numerous castes resort for worship. The following quotation from Manik Ganguli's work will show some of the various designations of Dharma and it will give us some idea of what a high percentage of Hindus are still the worshippers of Dharma:—

প্রথমে বন্দিব জয় জয় পরাংপর ।

• স্থানে স্থানে মূর্তিভেদ মহিমা বিস্তর ।

বেলডিদার বাঁকুড়ারায় বন্দী এক মনে ।

অসংখ্য প্রগতি শীতলসিংহের চরণে ।

ফুল্লরের কতেসিং বৈতলের বাঁকুড়ারায় ।

শুদ্ধভাবে বন্দি দৌহে নত হ'য়ে কায় ।

পাণ্ডুরামের বুড়াধর্মে বন্দিয়া সাদরে ।

শ্রামবাজারের দলুয়ারে দিয়ে জয় জয় কারে ।

দেপুরে জগৎয়ারে জোড় করি কর ।

গোপালপুরের কাঁকড়াবিছায় বন্দি তার পর ।

সিরাসের কাটাঠাদে ইন্দ্রাসেন বাঁকুড়ারায় ।

বন্দিব বিস্তর নির্মি করে নত কায় ।

গোপুরের স্বরূপনারায়ণ-সিংহাসনে ।

বন্দিয়া বন্দিব মঙ্গলপুরের রূপনারায়ণে ।

পশ্চিমপাড়ার যাত্রাসিদ্ধি বন্দিয়া তাঁহার ।

বড় জাগ্রামের বন্দিম মোহনরায় ।

গুড়াগ্রামের বন্দী শীতলনারাণে ।

আড়গুড়িয়ার খুঁদিয়ে বন্দী সাবধানে ।

আকুটিকুয়ার মাল্লারথনের করিয়া স্তবন ।

বন্দীপুরের শ্রামদ্বারের বন্দীরা চরণ

জাড়াগ্রামে কালুরারে কামিন্তা সহিত ।

জাজপুরে দেহারে বন্দী দাঢ় করি চিত ।

Mahamahopadhyaya H. P. Sastri concludes: "The diversity of names is infinite but with a little care a census of the followers of Dharma may be taken. The population will be considerable, nay, several millions."

Now, as far as our history of Mallabhoom is concerned, a little careful research on the subject will bring to light many new things for us. But with our present stock of knowledge, we may say, Buddhism in the guise of Dharma-worship was prevalent in Mallabhoom to a very great extent, up to the time of the introduction of Vaishnavism. Even to the present day a careful eye will be able to pick out from the general population a good many worshippers of Dharma though they generally go by the name of orthodox Hindus.

No doubt, Ramai Pandit was a glory to Mallabhoom. He was worshipped as a saint and his followers were many. Tradition tells us that he was an inhabitant of Moynapur in the Joypur Thana, where his descendants still worship Dharma as Jatrassiddhi. But there is one thing that strikes us forcibly. We find no mention of Ramai Pandit in the records of Bishnupur-Raj family. It may be that his religion was not so much

favoured by the Malla kings. But we find that the Malla kings granted rent-free lands to some of the Dharma worshippers; though this cannot be considered as a conclusive proof of the Mallas favouring the doctrine of Dharma. It may be due to their liberal spirit of charity which prompted them to grant rent-free lands to Mahomedans also; or the lands might have been granted to the Dharma worshippers after their Dharma had been included in the Hindu Pantheon.

CHAPTER III.

THE VAISHNAVA AGE.

Acknowledgment of Mahomedan Supremacy.—

From the sixteenth century onwards, the history of Mallabhoom becomes more and more accurate. The first touch of the Malla Kings with the Mahomedans brings in a new age of glory and prosperity. The Malla kings still reigned here then in their own way, without any political connection with the outside world. The forty-ninth king of the dynasty, Dhari Malla, was the first to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Nāwab of Bengal, promising to pay an annual tribute of one lakh and seven thousand rupees. But the Malla kings were never regular in payment and were treated more as an ally than a dependant. Thus Mr. R. C. Dutta writes—"The Musalman conquest of Bengal, however, made no difference to the Bishnupur princes. Protected by rapid currents like the Damodar, by extensive tracts of scrub wood and sal jungle as well as by strong forts like that of Bishnupur, these jungle kings were little known to the Musalman rulers of the fertile portions of Bengal and were never interfered with. For long centuries, therefore, the kings of Bishnupur were supreme within their extensive territories. At a later period of Musalman rule and when the Mughal power extended and consolidated itself on all sides a Mughal army sometimes made

its appearance near Bishnupur with claims of tribute and tribute was probably sometimes paid.

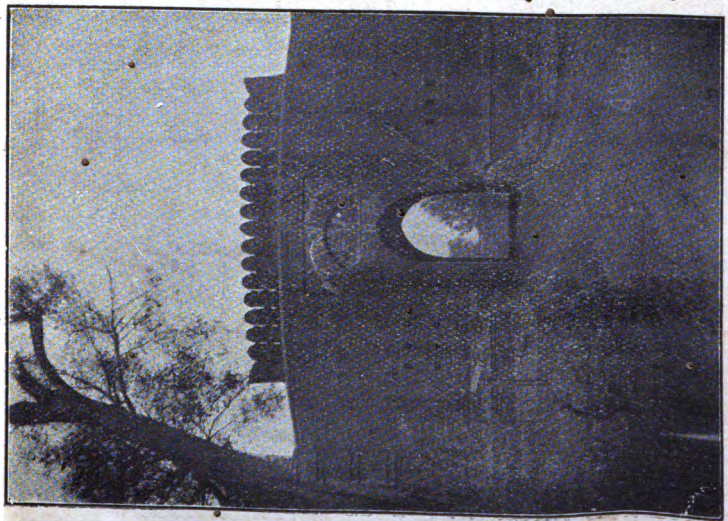
Nevertheless the Subahdars of Murshidabad never had that firm hold over the Rajas of Bishnupur, which they had over the closer and more recent Rajaships of Burdwan and Birbhoom."

Beera Hambeera.—Dhari Malla was a powerful monarch and lived to a good old age. He died after reigning forty-eight years. His son Beera Hambeera was the greatest king that ever reigned in Mallabhoom. Beer Hambeera was a contemporary of Akbar the Great. In his time, the fortifications of Bishnupur were greatly improved (1).

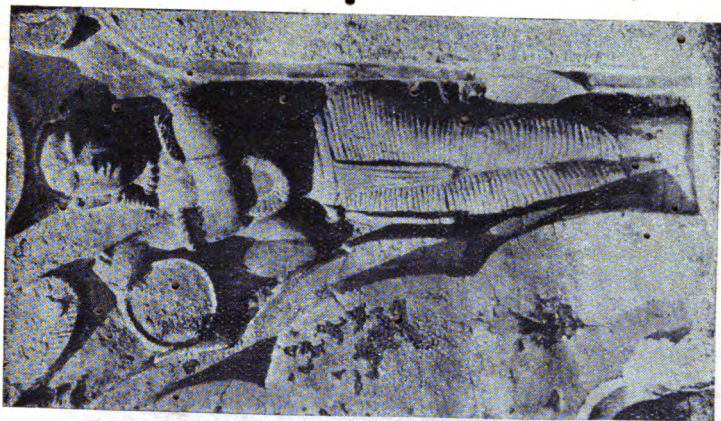
He placed fire arms on the walls of the fort and increased the numerical strength of the soldiers. He organised or rather improved the military organisation of Bishnupur on a Feudal Basis as we shall see later on.

Pathan Insurrection.—Beera Hambeera had to suffer much owing to his alliance with the Moguls against his neighbouring Pathan chiefs. In the first place, during the Mogul conquest of Orissa (1565) by Kalapahar, the general of Sulaiman Kararani (independent Nawab of Bengal), Daud Khan the son of Sulaiman surprised Bishnupur. But the king of Bishnupur collected soldiers in hot haste and succeeded in defeating the invador with

(1) Perhaps the gates (which are of Mahomedan type) and the big cannon were built during this period. Though there is no inscription, tradition ascribes to Beera Hambeera the construction of the Ras Mancha (which is still considered a magnificent temple).



STONE GATE



A MAN



a terrible slaughter; and tradition says that there were heaps of slain lying outside the northern entrance of the fort. This led the king to name that entrance "Mandu Malaghat" "Ford of skulls" to preserve the memory of the bloody contest. Soon after the conquest of Orissa Sulaiman died and was succeeded by his son Daud Khan. Daud was a weak king and submitted to the Moguls. But soon after he raised the standard of rebellion. His general Katlu Khan brought west Bengal up to the river Damodar under his sway. He encamped with his large army at the old site of Kotulpur (Katlupur), which has been named after him. This led Mana Singha and his son Jagat Singha, the Generals of Akbar, to come with a mighty force to subdue the rebellious chiefs. During the war Beera Hambeera played a prominent part. He sided with the Moguls and rendered good services to Mana Singha and Jagat Singha. It is said that once he managed to rescue Jagat Singha from the camp of the Pathans and brought him safe to Bishnupur (2).

Vaishnava Manuscripts looted.—The real civilisation of Bishnupur begins with the introduction (or rather the revival) of Vaishnavism. This was effected in a very singular way. Tradition says that the Malla Kings had a number of astrologers who could foretell many things correctly. Once they told Beera Hambeera that on a certain day, some precious gems would pass through the north-

(2) C. Stewart's History of Bengal and Akbarnama.

western borders of his kingdom. The Raja was tempted to take possession of those valuables even by robbery. He sent men to lie in ambush in those parts of his kingdom. These men succeeded in taking away three cart-loads of treasure which on being opened by the king was found to be valuable manuscripts of Vaishnava works.

The Vaishnavas of Brindaban (Shrijiva Goswami, Krishna Das Kaviraj and others) sent to Goura these cart loads of books under the care of Shrinibas, Norottom and Shyamananda (3). They were fast asleep after the

(3) Shrinibas, etc. were on their way to Goura :—

পঞ্চবসি বাসে রাধি রত্নাধপুৰ ।
 বিলম্বেশ বলি বাড়ে আনন্দপ্রচুর ।
 মালিরাড়া বলি গ্রামে ভৌমিক হয় ।
 রহিলা স্বচ্ছন্দে তাহে হইয়া নির্ভয় ।
 গোপালপুর একত্রীৰ অতি মনোহর ।
 সেইহানে রাজে বাসে আনন্দ অন্তর ॥

Then the manuscripts were looted and Shrinibas was wandering about like a madman :—

এথা ত আচার্য ঠাকুর বনেতে অসিরা ।
 একদিন বিষ্ণুপুরে প্রবেশিল গিঞা ॥
 কারে নাহি জানে তিহো। তারে নাহি জানে ।
 বাউলের প্রায় কেহো করে অনুমানে ॥
 এক বহির্বাস কোপীন এক হয় ।
 দেড়হাত বস্ত্র তাতে শরীর মোছয় ॥
 সেহো পুরাতন অতি মলিন বসন ।
 অতিধির প্রায় গ্রামে করেন ভ্রমণ ॥
 কতু ভিক্ষা মাগি ধায় কতু জলপান ।
 কোথা রহেন কোথা যান নাহি হানাহান ॥
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Shrinibas saw a man named Krishnaballava Chakravartti.

হেনকালে আইল। এক ব্রাহ্মণ কুমার ।
 দেখি জিজ্ঞাসিল তারে কি নাম তোমার ॥
 তিহৌ কহে কৃষ্ণবল্লভ মোর নাম হয় ।
 রাজার রাজ্যে বাস করি রাজার আজর ॥
 বিপ্রপুত্রের সৌন্দর্য্য দেখি স্থখ পাইল ।
 বিনয় করিয়া তারে কিছু জিজ্ঞাসিল ॥
 কহ দেখি কেবা রাজা কি নাম হয় ।
 ধার্মিক কি অন্ত মন তাহার আশয় ॥
 তিহৌ কহে রাজা হয় বড় দুহাচার ।
 দহ্যবৃত্তি করে সদা অত্যন্ত দুর্ব্বার ॥
 ধরে কাটে ধন লুটে নাচলে ঘাট বাট ।
 বীর হাধীর নাম হয় রাজার মলপাট ॥
 এইরূপে গেল কাল দিন কথো হৈল ।
 দুই পাড়ি নারি ধন লুটিয়া আনিল ॥

* * * * *
 দেউলি বলিয়া গ্রাম অতি দূর নয় ।
 নদীপারে অর্ধকোশ মোর বাসা হয় ॥

Shrinibas attended the Court of Beera Hambeera—

আর দিন ভোজন করি য়ার দুইজনে ।
 তাহা উত্তরিল। বাঁহা রাজা বিজ্ঞমানে ॥
 ভাগবত পড়ে (রাজ) পণ্ডিত রাজা তাহা শুনে ।
 অর্থ করে ভালমন্দ কিছুই না জানে ॥

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রাস পঞ্চাধ্যায়ী পড়ে সদর্থ না জানে ।
 বসিয়া শ্রীনিবাস ঠাকুর কিছু করে নিবেদনে ॥

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ব্যাস ভাবিত এই গ্রন্থ ভাগবত ।
 শ্রীধর স্বামীর টীক। আছেয়ে সম্মত ॥

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না শুনে পণ্ডিত রাজা তার পানে চায় ।
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 তিহৌ কহে কৃষ্ণবল্লভ মোর নাম হয়।
 রাজার রাজ্যে বাস করি রাজার আজর ॥
 বিশ্রপুত্রের সৌন্দর্য দেখি স্থখ পাইল।
 বিনয় করিয়া তারে কিছু জিজ্ঞাসিল ॥
 কহ দেখি কেবা রাজা কি নাম হয়।
 ধার্মিক কি অস্ত্র মন তাহার আশয় ॥
 তিহৌ কহে রাজা হয় বড় ছুরাচার।
 দস্যবৃত্তি করে সদা অত্যন্ত দুর্বীর ॥
 ধরে কাটে ধন লুটে নাচলে ঘাট বাট।
 বীর হাবীর নাম হয় রাজার মল্লপাট ॥
 এইরূপে গেল কাল দিন কথো হৈল।
 দুই পাড়ি মারি ধন লুটিয়া আনিল ॥

* * * * *
 দেউলি বলিয়া গ্রাম অতি দূর নয়।
 নদীপারে অর্ধকোশ মোর বাসা হয় ॥

Shrinibas attended the Court of Beera Hambeera—

আর দিন ভোজন করি যার দুইজনে।
 তাহা উত্তরিল। বাঁহা রাজা বিজ্ঞমানে ॥
 ভাগবত পড়ে (রাজ) পণ্ডিত রাজা তাহা শুনে।
 অর্থ করে ভালমদল কিছুই না জানে ॥

* * * * *
 রাস পঞ্চাধ্যায়ী পড়ে সদর্থ না জানে।
 বসিয়া শ্রীনিবাস ঠাকুর কিছু করে নিবেদনে ॥

* * * * *
 ব্যাস ভাবিত এই গ্রন্থ ভাগবত।
 শ্রীধর স্বামীর টীকা আছেয়ে সমস্ত ॥

* * * * *
 না শুনে পণ্ডিত রাজা তার পানে চায়।
 সেইদিন ঘরে আইল আর দিন বার ॥

the robbery. When Shrinibas and others came to know of their loss they were totally disconcerted and knew not what to do.

সেই দিনে পকাখারী পণ্ডিত ব্যাখ্যানে ।
 অসম্মত অর্থ হৈল করে নিবেদনে ॥
 পণ্ডিতের অর্থ শুনি রাজা আছে বসি ।
 খারীর যে টাকা ব্যাখ্যা কর না প্রকাশী ॥
 পণ্ডিতের ক্রোধ হৈল রাজা তারে কর ।
 কিবা অর্থ কর, ব্রাহ্মণ কেনে বা দোষর ॥
 পণ্ডিত কহে মহারাজ ভাগবতের অর্থ ।
 আমা বিনা বাখানয়ে কাহার সামর্থ ॥
 কোথাকার কুত্র বিপ্র, মধ্যে কহে কথা ।
 কিবা বাখানিবে তুমি আসিবেন এথা ॥
 রাজা কহে বাখানহ ব্রাহ্মণ কুমার ।
 ঠাকুর উঠিয়া কহে যে আজ্ঞা তোমার ॥
 বসি বাখানয়ে সুখে পড়ে পুনর্বার ।
 এক লোকে ব্যাখ্যা হয়ে কতক প্রকার ॥
 শুনিয়া রাজার চিত্তে পরম উল্লাস ।
 রাজার সাক্ষাতে বিপ্রের (শ্রীনিবাসের) হল বড় আস ॥
 * * * *

নমস্কার করি রাজা জিজ্ঞাসা করর ।
 কোথা হইতে আগমন হৈল মহাশয় ॥
 শ্রীনিবাস নাম মোর এই দেশে বাস ।
 রাজসভা দেখিবারে মোর অভিলাষ ॥
 যেন মহারাজ তেন সভার পণ্ডিত ।
 শুনিয়া দেখিয়া মোর আনন্দিত চিত ॥
 * * * *

রাজে রাজা আইলেন ঠাকুরের স্থানে ।
 ভক্ষণ করিবার লাগি করেন নিবেদনে ॥
 * * * *

প্রাতঃকালে উঠে (রাজা) গেলা ঠাকুরের স্থানে ।
 দাঁড়ারে দর্শন করি করয়ে প্রণামে ॥
 ঠাকুর কহেন বৈস ভাল হইল আইলে ।
 অনেক ভাগ্য হয় রাজা দেখিলে প্রাতঃকালে ॥

Shrinibas and Beera Hambeera.—Shrinibas walked about like a madman in search of the manuscripts and at last reached Deulj four miles north of Bishnupur. Here he was entertained by a Brahman named Krishna Ballava Chakravarty. The latter took him to the court of Beera Hambeera. The whole court was then deeply

রাজা কহে বেই আজ্ঞা সেই সত্য হয় ।
তোমার দর্শনে কত গাপ কর হয় ॥

Shrinibas was explaining the Bhagabata—

শ্রীমুখের অর্থ শুনি পাণ্ডাণ মিলয় ।
রাজা কালে হস্ত দিয়া আপন সাধায় ॥
* * * * *
কহ ঠাকুর কোথা হইতে হইল আগমন ।
কিবা নাম কহ শুনি হির হউক মন ॥
শ্রীনিবাস নাম আইল বৃন্দাবন হইতে ।
লক্ষ গ্রন্থ শ্রীকৃষ্ণের প্রকাশ করিতে ॥
* * * * *
মোর প্রভু শ্রীগোপাল ভট্ট তাঁর নাম ।
শ্রীজীব গোস্বামি মোরে আজ্ঞা দিল দান ॥
রাজা কহে বহু ভাগ্য বংশের আমার ।
এই দেশে আগমন হইল যে তোমার ॥
চুরি না করিলে নহে তোমার আগমন ।
অধমেরে কৃপা করে কে আছে এমন ॥
বেশত গাড়ী সব তেমত আছয় ।
উচিত যে শাস্তি হয় কর মহাশয় ॥
আমার উদ্ধার লাগি তোমার আগমন ।
আমা হেন মহাপাপী নাহি কোনজন ॥
ইহা বলে কাদে রাজা ভূমে গড়ি যায় ।
স্বর্গের প্রায় দেহ গড়াগড়ি যায় ॥

Initiation of Beera Hambeera—

আবাচের কৃষ্ণপক্ষে তৃতীয়া দিবসে ।
জাল দিন নাহি গয়ে বুকিল বিশেষে ॥

absorbed in the Bhagabata (Rasha Panchaddhyaya with Shridhar's commentary), read and explained to them by the Raj Pandit Vyas Chakravarty (4). Shrinibas sat silently with the audience to attend to the exposition of the Bhagabata. But Shrinibas's exceptional scholarship led him into discussion with the Raj Pandit, and at last to take up the explanation himself. He succeeded in moving the whole audience to tears with his excellent interpretation. In this way, he became introduced to the Raja. The Raja entreated him to stay in his palace, and thus came under the influence of the latter, whose purity of character and devotion to God very soon changed his mind. He entreated Shrinibas to be his preceptor to lead him in the path of virtue. Shrinibas, moved by his entreaties, initiated him into Vaishnavism on the 3rd lunar day of Asard and from this time Shrinibas became a regular visitor to Beera Hambeera, his devoted disciple.

Beera Hambeera a Vaishnava.—Beer Hambeera became an ardent Vaishnava and devoted all his energy and resources to propagate his new religion. He introduced or rather revived the worship of Vishnu in a

সেইদিন মন্ত্রদীক্ষা রাজার হবেক ।
 ঠাকুর বিজ্ঞমানে সামগ্রী করিল অনেক ॥
 রাখাক্ষক মন্ত্র দিল ধ্যানাদিক যত ।
 শিক্ষা করাইল শ্রীকৃপের গ্রন্থমত ॥

[প্রেমবিলাস—ত্রয়োদশ বিলাস]

(4) His descendants—Ananta Lal Goswami and others live in Hazarapara in the middle of the town.

very magnificent way. He got the idol of Kalachand built by his excellent artisans and the ceremony of the initial worship of the idol was performed by Shrinivas, as known from the Bhakti Ratnakar (5).

He is said to have brought Madan Mohan to Bishnupur from the temple of Dharani Brahman of Briṣha-bhanupur in the district of Burdwan. It is said that once on his way back to Bishnupur, he halted at the house of Dharani Brahman to offer his prayer to Vishnu. The sight of the Vishnu, named Madan Mohan, charmed him and he made up his mind to take away the idol. The Vaishnava authors try to defend him from the disgrace of an idol-stealer by means of many holy dreams—

কৃষ্ণ অঙ্গ গঙ্গ পেয়ে নিদ্রা ভেঙ্গে গেল ।
 লক্ষ চন্দ্র-জ্যোতি রাজা শিয়রে হেরিল ॥
 রাজা বলে কেবা তুমি নাম নাহি জানি ।
 মদনমোহন বলেন স্তম্ভুর বাণী ॥
 শুনি রাজা আমি সেই মদনমোহন ।
 গোপনে রাখহ মোরে করিয়ে যতন ॥
 শুনি রাজা ভুলে গেল মনের সব ব্যথা ।
 গোপনে রাখিব কিন্তু এ কেমন কথা ॥
 মদনমোহন বলেন বলিরে বচন ।
 আসিবে খুজিতে মোরে দ্বারায় ব্রাহ্মণ ॥

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- (5) হৈল বীর হাধীরের পরম উল্লাস
 শ্রীকালচাঁদের সেবা করিলা প্রকাশ.
 শ্রীআচার্য্যপ্রভু তাঁর করে অভিষেক ।
 নবম ভরঙ্গ p. 580.

বেদিন তোমায় বিজ্ঞ সমর্পিয়ে দিবে ।

মদনমোহন তবে তোমায় হইবে ।

" (*Madan Mohan Bandana*).

But as matters stand one is inclined to believe that Beera Hambeera's excessive devotion to Madan Mohan, excited at the first sight, led him to take away the idol even by theft.

Pilgrimage.—Beera Hambeera became so devout a follower of Vaishnavism that he was named Shri Chaitanya Dasa by Shrijiva Goswami, the head of the Vaishnavas of Brindaban (6). There is a tradition that Beera Hambeera went on a pilgrimage to Brindaban, which had been restored to its former glory by the followers of Shrichaitanya, the founder of Gauriya Vaishnavism (7).

Beera Hambeera introduced new Vaishnava ideas to Bishnupur from Brindaban. He adorned his own capital in the manner of the Vaishnavas of Brindaban. He named tanks (Jamuna, Kalindi, Shyamkundu, Radhakundu) and villages (Dwaraka, Mathura) after the names of those

(6) শ্রীজীবগোবামী হইলা প্রসন্ন তোমারে ।

শ্রীচৈতন্যদাস নাম খুলি তোমার ।

শুনিয়া রাজার নেত্রে বহে অশ্রুধার ।

নবম তরঙ্গ 580.

(*Bhakti Ratnakar*.)

(7) Nrisingha Deb, king of Manbhoom, was mentioned in the Vaishnava works as one of the authors of Vaishnava Hymns. He was a fellow disciple of Beera Hambeera.

in Brindaban. He also introduced some of the Vaishnava festivals (Rash, Dole, etc.) into Bishnupur. He composed many hymns and songs on Vaishnavism. Two of his songs can yet be found in the Bhakti Ratnakar; they will bring to light the condition of his mind after his conversion (8). Beera Hambeera composed many songs

(8)

First Song.

প্রভু মোর ঈনিবাস পুরাইলে মনের আশ
তোরা বিহু গতি নাহি আর ।
আছিনু বিষয় কীট, বড়ই লাগিত মিট
যুটাইলে রাজ অহঙ্কার ।
করিতু গরল পান সে ভেল ডাহিন বাম
দেখাইলা অমিরার ধার ।
পিব পিব করে মন সব ভেল উচট্টন
এসব তোমার ব্যবহার ।
রাধা পদে হুধারানী সে পদে করিলা দাসী
গোরা পদে বাঁধি দিলা চিত ।
শ্রীরাধিকাগণ সহ দেখাইলা কুপ্ত গেহ
জানাইলা দুহ প্রেম রীত ।
যমুনার কূলে বাই তীরে সখি ধাওয়া ধাই
রাধা কানু বিলসয়ে হুখে ।
এ বীর হাবীর হীর। ব্রজপুর সদা ধীর।
যাঁহ। অলি উড়ে লাখে লাখে ।

Second Song.

শুনগো মরম সখি কালিয়া কমল আঁখি
কিবা কৈল কিছুই না জানি ।
কেমন করয়ে মন, সব যোগো উচট্টন
প্রেম করি খোরাইনু পরাণি ।
শুনিয়া দেখিনু কালা, দেখিয়া পাইনু জালা
নিবাইতে নাহি পায় পানি ।
অগুরু চন্দন আনি, দেহেতে লেপিনু ছানি
না নিবার হিরার আঙনি ।

which are not all found in the Bhakti Ratnakar . . .

শ্রীচৈতন্য দাস নামে যে গীত বর্ণিল
বিস্তারের ডবে তাহা নাহি জানাইল ।

নবম তরঙ্গ ।

He had a great collection of Vaishnava manuscripts in his library. In this way Bishnupur became the “Gupta Brindaban” (Veiled Brindaban) of the Vaishnavas.

Vaishnavas Favoured by Beera Hambeera.—Beera Hambeera was a great patron of the devout Vaishnavas. He endowed Mathas for Manohar Das (9) (the author of Dinamoni Chandrodaya) at Badanganja and Sonamukhi, in the districts of Hooghly and Bankura respectively. He wanted to make Shrinibas an inhabitant of his kingdom. With this idea in his mind, he successfully negotiated a marriage of old Shrinibas with a beautiful daughter of Raghu Nath Chakravarty of Gopalpur, west of Bishnupur (10). He passed the days of his life as an

বসিয়া থাকিয়া যবে ; আসিয়া উঠায় তবে
লৈয়া যায় যমুদার তীর ।
কি করিতে কিনা করি, সদাই ঝুরিয়া মরি
ভিলেক নাহিক রহি বীর ।
শাশুড়ী ননদী মোর সদাই বাসয়ে চোর
গৃহপতি কিরিয়া না চোর ।
এ বীর হাযীর চিত্ত ঈনিবাস অনুগত
মজি গেলা কালচাঁদের পায়ে ।

(9) In 1581, A. D., Manohar Das died at Joypur (Rajputana) on his way to Brindaban. His tomb is still extant there.

(10) Prem Bilas—Conversation of Manohar Das with Gopal Bhatta :—

বিষ্ণুপুর মোর ঘর হয় বার ক্রোশ ।
রাজার রাজহে বাস করি হইয়া সন্তোষ ॥

earnest promoter of Vaishnavism, and in his old days he went to Shri Brindaban and died there in peace.

Beera Hambeera's Toleration.—The greatness and sincerity of Beera Hambeera were also manifested in his noble spirit of toleration in religious matters (17). Once a Mahomedan saint of the name of Kurman Shah came to his court. Beera Hambeera received him with high respect, and granted lands for his maintenance. Kurman Shah lived on the site of modern Kurmantala named after him, where his grave is still adored by Hindus and Mahomedans alike.

Character of Beera Hambeera.—The Character of Beera Hambeera presented a model for the Vaishnava

আচার্যের সেবক রাজা বীর হাবীর ।
 বাসাচার্য আদি অমাত্য পরম স্থধীর ।
 সেই গ্রামে আচার্য প্রভু বাস করি আছে ।
 গ্রাম ভূমিবৃত্তি আদি রাজারা দিয়াছে ।
 এই ত কান্ধন মাসে বিবাহ করিল ।
 অত্যন্ত যোগ্যতা তার যতেক কহিল ।
 মোন হয়ে ভট কিছু না বলিল আর ।
 “স্বলংপাদ” “স্বলংপাদ” কহে বার বার ।

The family of Prof. Radhika Prosad Goswami (Musieian) are the descendants of Shrinibas.

(11) Religious toleration is one of the marked features of the history of Mallabhoom. Hindus and Mahomedans lived side by side without any religious rivalry. The Rajas treated Hindu and Mahomedan subjects alike. Rent-free lands were granted to the Mahomedans also. Even to the present day we find that the Mahomedans are greatly helped by the Hindus in the construction of their ‘Tazias’ (ornamented Towers of paper and bamboo) to be exhibited before the Raja on the occasion of the Maharam, for a reward to the best one.

kings of the age. He was always religious and devoted to Vishnu. He never tasted anything without offering prayer. He was always charitable, humble and kind in his disposition. In the early part of his reign, we have seen how successfully he combatted against the enormous odds of the Pathans. He was always brave and energetic; but we find him more peace-loving and kind hearted during the latter part of his life, probably owing to the religious influence of the Vaishnavas.

The Vaishnava authorities are unanimous in their opinion that Vaishnavism was first introduced into Mallabhoom in the time of Beera Hambeera. But there are other facts which do not exactly fit in with their views. The first thing is that the capital of Mallabhoom has been called Bishnupur (a Vaishnava name) since the time of its establishment which was undoubtedly long before the days of Beera Hambeera. It cannot be said that Bishnupur has got its name from the time of the conversion of Beera Hambeera, its former name having been changed. For if such an event had actually taken place, the Vaishnava authors would surely have mentioned it in their works to the glory of their own creed. In the second place, the Vaishnava authors mention that when Shrinibas was first introduced into the court of Beera Hambeera the Bhagabata was being read and commented upon by a Raj-Pandit. This goes to a great extent to show that Vaishnavism was no new faith in Bishnupur for Shrinibas to propagate; but it was already prevalent more or less among the people of Bishnupur. We can

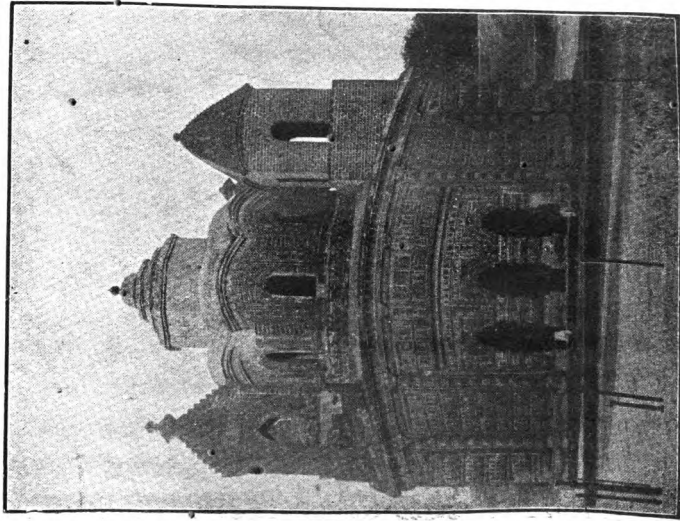
not exactly say what was the religious condition of the people of Bishnupur at that time. As far as we can learn from tradition, and inscriptions, the Malla Kings never remained attached to the same religious doctrine or the same god (though Ananta Deb was said to be their family god) for a long period of time. Prithvi Malla, the thirty-seventh king of the line, made the temple of Sandeswar in 641, M. E. (12), in the early part of the fourteenth century. Then we find that Patita Malla built the temple of Jagannath (near Syamkundu to the north of the palace) in 755, M. E. Again, we find that the temple of Mrinmoyee was built in 907, M. E. (12). Then again we find that the construction of the temple of Malleswar was begun in the early part of Beera Hambeera's reign. After that we find that up to the last all the temples were built for Radhakrishna and dedicated to them. Thus we are to conclude that the Malla kings at the time of the establishment of the capital at Bishnupur were in all probability followers of Vishnu (13). Then for the period up to the thirteenth century we do not know anything from which we may get any hint as to the religion of the Mallas. But during this period Ramai Pandit flourished in Mallabhoom. Buddhism in

(12) Inscriptions are missing now, but the late Babu Sivadas Bhattacharyya got this information from the inscription, which he might have seen with his own eyes.

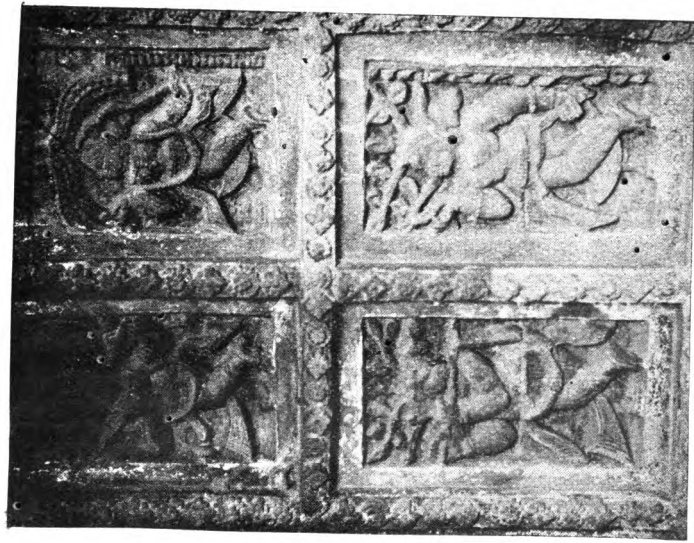
(13) This fact is also corroborated by the Susunia inscription found out by Prachya Vidhya Maharnava Nagendra Nath Bosu, who inferred from the Vaishnavi Chakra of the inscription that Vaishnavism had some hold in Mallabhoom in the 5th century, A.D.

the guise of Dharmaworship might have been greatly followed by the lower class people (Bagties, Hardis, etc.) of that age. The Tantrikas (the followers of Tantra) might have exercised a certain amount of religious influence in this period. Then for the three centuries that immediately precede the Vaishnava age, we find the Malla kings sometimes Shaiva (followers of Shiva) sometimes Vaishnava (followers of Vishnu), sometimes Shakta (followers of Shakti). Tradition tells us that the Malla kings were such extreme Shaktas that they were in the habit of offering human sacrifices before Mrinmoyee. But the introduction or, rather, the revival of Vaishnavism by Shrinibas turned the tide for ever in favour of civilisation and humanity; and the glory of Mallabhoom as a centre of art and civilisation began from this auspicious moment, as we shall see presently.

Raghu Nath Singha.—Beera Hambeera was succeeded by Dhari Hambeera, who also was a devout king like his father. But he was soon dethroned by his brother Raghu Nath. Raghu Nath was a brave king, having enormous physical strength and military skill. The Rajas of Bishnupur, though they acknowledged the supremacy of the Mahomedans from the time of Dhari Malla and promised to pay a tribute of one lakh and seven thousand rupees, were never regular in payment. Beera Hambeera and Dhari Hambeera were the most irregular of them. Thus Shah Sujah, the then Nawab of Raj Mahal, was on the look out for an opportunity to realise the arrear revenues from the Malla kings. The

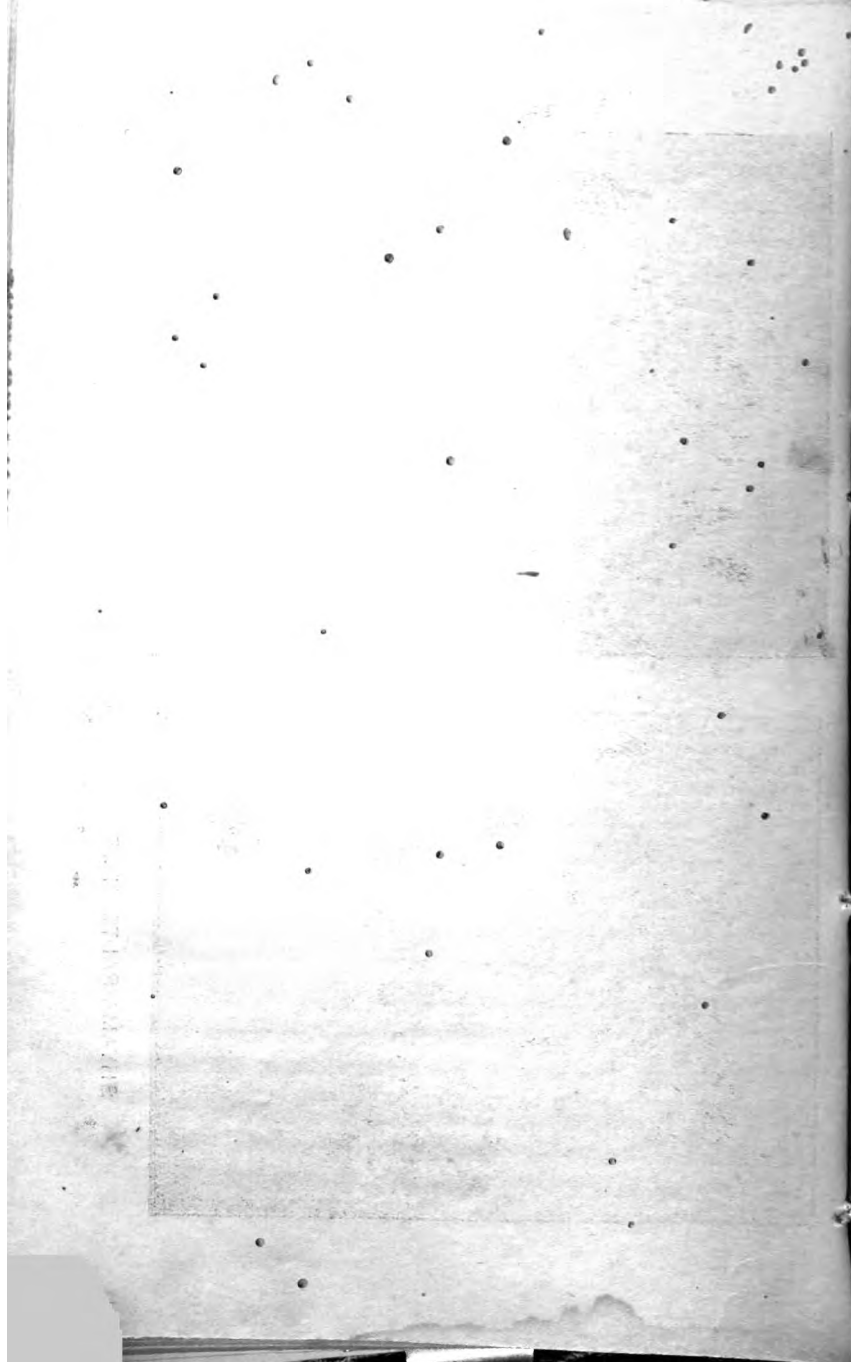


SHYAMA RAI TEMPLE



RADHA KRISHNA (Shyama Rai temple)

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disorders at the beginning of the reign of Raghu Nath, owing to the deposition of Dhari Hambeera, gave the Nawab a fitting opportunity. He at once sent for Raghu Nath under the pretence of an invitation. Coming to Raj Mahal, Raghu Nath found himself a prisoner. Tradition says that here Raghu Nath rode an incredible distance on the back of a horse, well-known for its savage temper, and not only got the remission of the revenue but also gained the title of "Singha." Since then the Mallas are known as Singhas. It is said that he got that honour from the Nawab through the grace of the goddess worshipped by Kamala Kanta Sarbabhoum, a Barendra Brahman of Rajmahal. So he brought Kamala Kanta to Bishnupur and granted him land for his maintenance. Kamala Kanta is the ancestor of the Barendra Brahman family of Bishnupur.

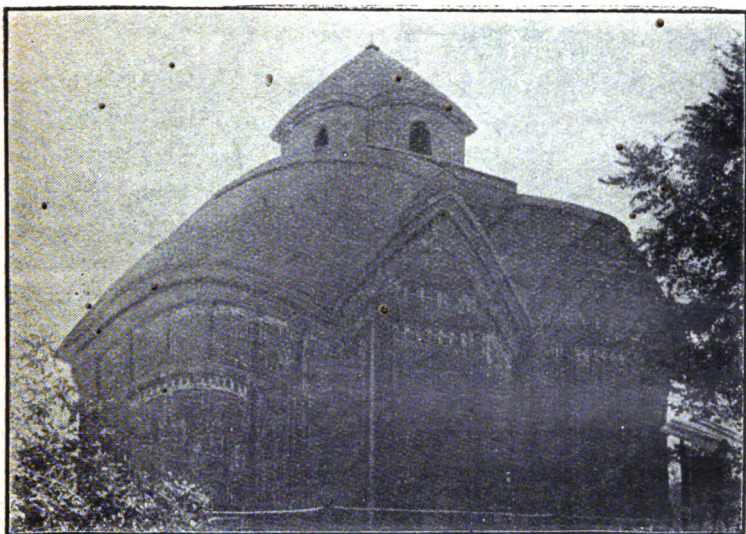
Temples.—During the reign of Raghunath, Bishnupur became a very beautiful city. He dug five *Bandhs* (embankments for storing water) and erected many temples. The temple of Malléswar was built by him; the inscription (14) in the temple states that it was dedicated to the God Shiva in the name of his father Beera Singha (Hambeera). Perhaps the construction of the temple was begun by Beera Hambeera, who was at first a worshipper of Shiva. But his sudden conversion to Vaishnavism left the temple unfinished, as all his energies were directed towards the propagation of his new religion.

(14) বহুকর নব গণিতে মল্লশকে ঐবীরসিংহেন ।
অতি-ললিতং দেব কুলং নিহিতং শিবপাদপদ্মেবু ॥

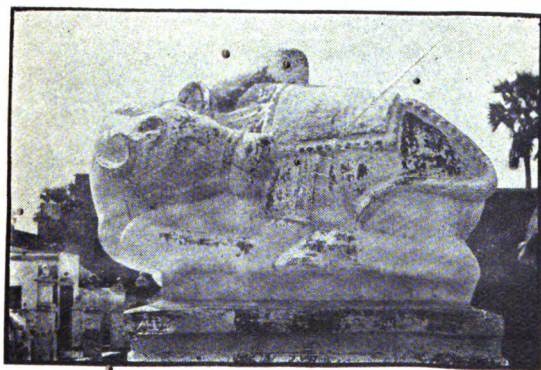
But his son Raghunath felt that the temple begun by his father should not be left unfinished. In the inscription he named his father Beera Singha, though the title of 'Singha' was first gained by himself. It seems probable that out of respect for his father, he did not think it proper to name him as Hambeera, he himself being a Singha (15). The temple is of the type of the 'single square tower.' It is situated at Kadakuli and is now under the supervision of the neighbouring Barendra Brahmans. Raghunath built three other beautiful temples. They were all dedicated to Shri Radha Krishna. The first is the lovely temple of the 'Pancharatna type' (having five towers) of Shyama Rai. The inscription (16) gives the dates as the year 949 Malla Era (1643 A.D.). The locality where the temple is situated is called Shyam Rai Bazar, after the name of the idol of this temple. The second temple is the Jora-Bangla (17), situated on the south-eastern side of the remains of the palace. It is of a singular type, as the name indicates. The building consists of two *Banglas*, having two slanting roofs on two sides, crowned by a small tower. It was dedicated

(15) The temple could not have been built by Beera Singha, (the son of Raghu Nath) as he reigned from 962, M. E. Moreover, as a devout Vaishnava, he could not have taken up the construction of such a magnificent temple of Shiva. And if the temple had been built by this Beera Singha then his father's name must have been mentioned in the Inscription, as was the fashion in his reign.

- (16) ত্রিধাক্ষমুদে শশাঙ্ক বেদীক বৃত্তে নবরত্নরত্নম্ ।
 ত্রিবিহঙ্গীর নরেশ সুগুদমৌ নৃপঃ ত্রিঘনুনাথ সিংহঃ ॥
- (17) ত্রিধাক্ষমুদে শুধাংগুরসাক্ষমে সৌধগৃহং শকেহকে ।
 ত্রিবিহঙ্গীর নরেশ সুগুদমৌ নৃপঃ ত্রিঘনুনাথ সিংহঃ ॥



JORA BANGLA TEMPLE



BULL COUCHANT (Malleswar)

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in the year 961, M.E. (1655, A.D.). The next temple is of Kalachand (18). It has been already noted that Shrinibas performed the ceremony of initial worship of this idol in the time of Beera Hambeera. But no temple was built at that time. Raghunath Singha thought it to be his duty to dedicate a temple to his father's idol Kalachand.

Beera Singha.—Raghu Nath Singha was succeeded by his son Beera Singha. Tradition tells us that Beera Singha was a very cruel king. He confiscated rent-free lands and treasures enjoyed by the members of the Raj family, and put some of them into prison. Madhab Singha, his younger brother, protested against such unjust and cruel acts. The Raja grew angry and had his brother poisoned. Fote Singha (another brother of the Raja) fled away from his kingdom and having married a princess of Dhalbhoom established a petty kingdom at Raipur (now a police station in the south-western part of the District). Beera Singha was so cruel that he even had two of his sons murdered. He also ordered his men to kill his first son Durjan Singha. But his men did not carry out his order, and, having concealed the prince, they gave the Raja to understand that the murder had been committed. Even now there is a tradition that the Raja used to punish criminals by having them walled up alive. But Beera Singha was always careful to keep the subordinate chiefs in order. Hear-

(18) ঐরাধিকাক্তক নুদে শকেধির সাক্ষ্যন্তে নবরত্নমেতৎ ।

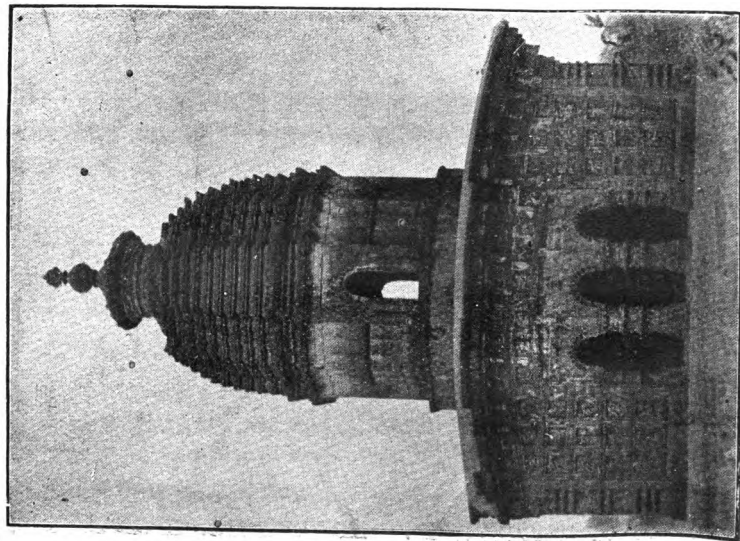
ঐবীরহখীর নরেশ হুম্মদৌ নৃপঃ ঐরঘুনাথ সিংহ ॥

ing that Moniram Adhvarjya of Maliara oppressed his people and defied the authority of the Bishnupur Raj, he sent his collector with a few Baikandajes. The collector rode on an elephant and proceeded up to the gate of the palace; and, finding the gate closed against him he tried to break it by force. Moniram, who was seeking protection direct from the Nawab of Murshidabad, ordered his nephew to drive away the collector and his men. The nephew came forward with bow and arrow in hand and shot right and left. The elephant was nearly killed, and the collector narrowly escaped with his life to tell the sad tale to Beera Singha. Exasperated at this, Beera Singha sent his General with a large army to punish the audacious Moniram by cutting him to pieces. The General entered the palace, triumphantly captured Moniram and dragged him mercilessly to Subirarda (a village near Maliara), and there he literally followed the inhuman order of his master by cutting the captive in a thousand pieces.

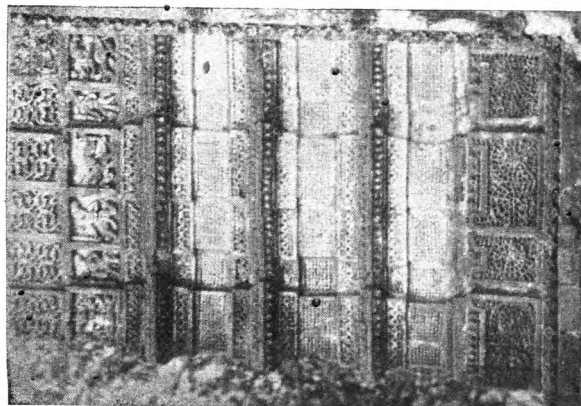
Temples.—Beera Singha erected the temple of Lalji (19) in 964 (1658), which lies to the east of the remains of the palace. His wife Seromani Devi dedicated a temple (20) to the idol Murali Mohan in the year 971,

(19) ঐরাধিকা কৃষ্ণদে শঙ্কর রসায় যুক্ত নবরত্নমতং ।
মল্লধিপঃ ঐরঘুনাথ মহাদে নৃপঃ ঐযুত বীরসিংহ ॥

(20) ঐঐচুর্জ্জ্বল সিংহ ভূপজননী মল্লাবনী বল্লভ
ঐল ঐযুত বীরসিংহ মহিষী ঐলঐচুড়ামণিঃ ।
মল্লানে শশিসপ্তরক্ষ বিমিতে ঐরাধিকা কৃষ্ণোঃ
ঐতৈয় সৌধগৃহং স্তবদয়দিদং পূর্ণেন্তোহপ্যজ্ঞম্ ॥



KALACHAND TEMPLE



COLUMN (Madan M temple)

M.E., 1665, A.D. : She also dedicated a temple to Madan Mohan in the year 971 (21). This temple lies on the western side of Bishnupur.

Beera Singha was seriously ill in 988, M.E., and began to repent of his past cruel acts and especially of the murder of his three sons. At that time his men brought out his first son Durjan Singha from concealment and placed him before the king. The king was beside himself with joy and immediately crowned him king.

Durjan Singha.—Durjan Singha was not cruel like his father. He built a very magnificent temple for Madan Mohan on the south-eastern side of the town (22). The temple is of the type of a single tower on a square building, with the curved Bengali roof, and is exquisitely beautiful. Its southern wall is adorned with beautiful images and designs moulded on brick. The temple is now empty, its idol having been sold to the Mitra family of Bag Bazar, Calcutta. Only for a few days in the year does the temple resound with the holy name of God, during the Chabbis Prahar (uttering the holy name of God continuously for three days and nights).

(21) রাধাকৃষ্ণ পদপ্রাপ্তে সোমসপ্তাহগণেশকে ।

রঘুনাথ মহীনাথ ভনয়তোন্নতাত্মরাঃ

বীরসিংহ নরেশস্ত ভীরবমানসংগমঃ ।

মহিষ্যাতি প্রমোদে নবরত্নং সমর্পিতং ॥ ৯৭১ ॥

(22) শ্রীরাধাব্রজরাজনন্দনপদান্তোজ্জ্বলং প্রীতয়ে ।

মল্লান্দে ঋগ্নীরাজ দীর্ঘগণিতে মাসেস্তুচৌ নির্মলে ।

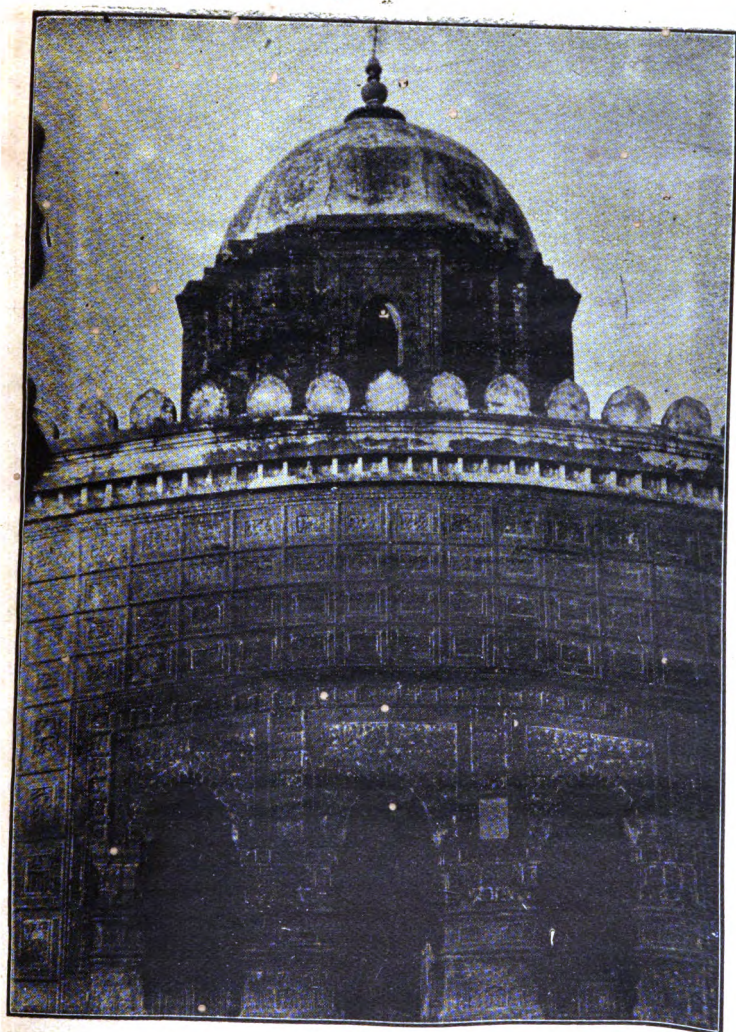
সৌধং স্থলরত্নমন্দিরমিদং সার্ব্বিকং চচেতোহলিনা ।

শ্রীমদ্ভূজঙ্গন সিংহ ভূমিপতিনা দত্তং বিমলকান্তনা ॥

Raghu Nath Singha II and the Rebellion of Shova Singha.—Durjan Singha was succeeded by Raghu Nath Singha II in the year 1008 (1702). Raghu Nath Singha was a brave king. He revived the military glory of the Mallas. In his reign Shova Singha, the king of Chafa Barda (Midnapur), raised the banner of independence (23). Rahim Khan, the leader of the Pathans of Orissa, was his ally and general. They together proceeded towards Burdwan. Perhaps on the way they could not take the impregnable fort of Bishnupur. Ram Krishna, the Raja of Burdwan, was defeated and killed by them and his whole family was made prisoner. Jagatram, the eldest son of Ram Krishna, escaped in a palanquin by dressing himself as a female and sought refuge at Dacca, the then capital of Bengal. He told the whole story of the rebellion and of his disaster to Nawab Ibrahim Khan. Ibrahim Khan was not a brave soldier. He sent his "Fozdar" Nurrulla to subdue the rebellion. Nurrulla could not defeat the Pathan General. Rather, he had not the courage to face the Pathan army. So at last the Nawab sent his son Zabardast Khan to quell the rebellion. On the other hand, the Emperor Aurungzeb sent his grandson Azim Ushan to pacify the country. The Raja of Bishnupur, who was always true to the Moguls, defeated Shova Singha (24) in a pitched battle

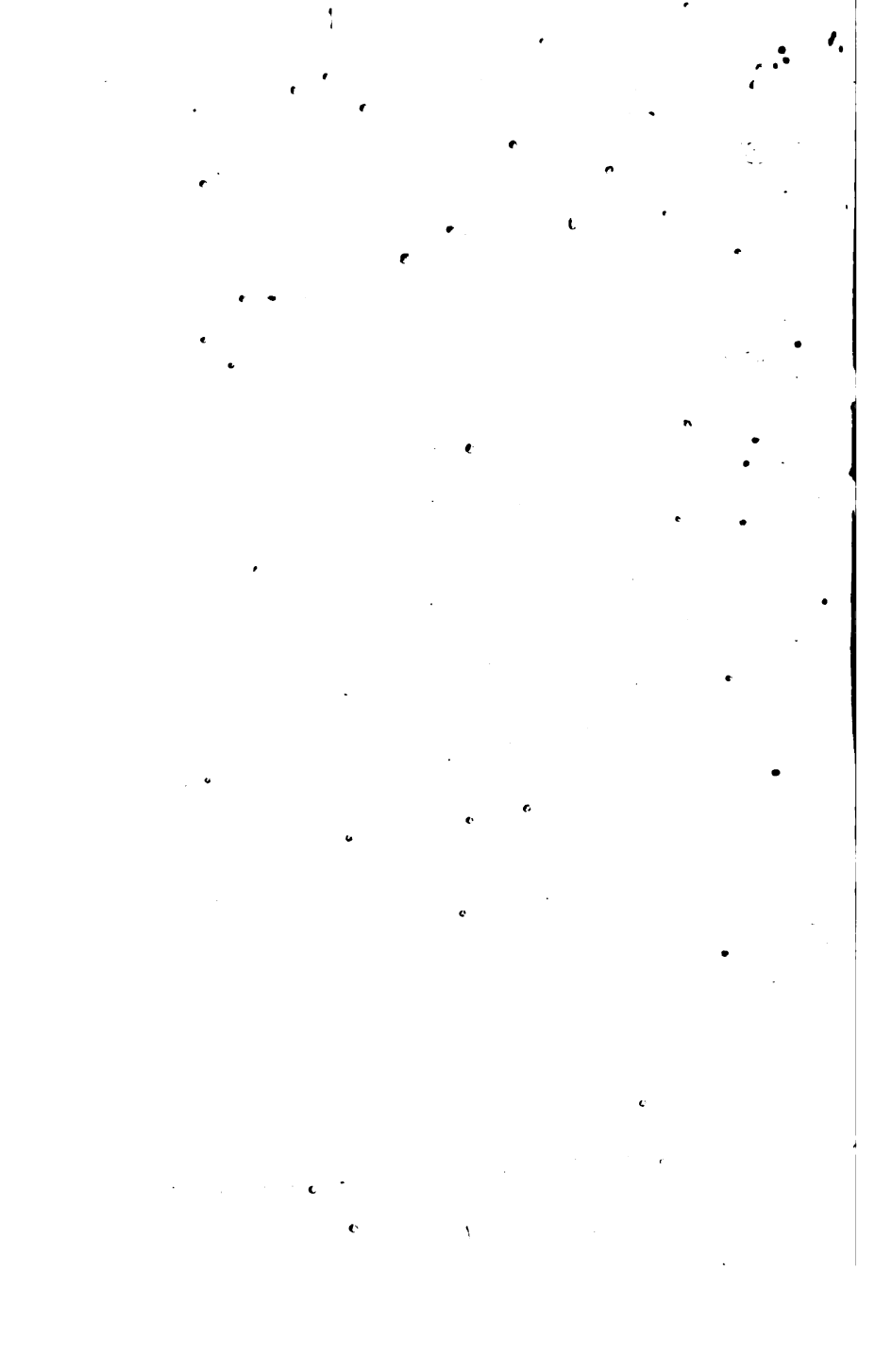
(23) Cf. "নবাবিদ্ভাবনী" p. 23 by Kali Prasanna Bandopadhyaya.

(24) According to another story Shova Singha was murdered by the captive princess of Burdwan in his camp, when in a weak moment he tried to defile her modesty.



MADAN MOHAN TEMPLE

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and carried away his daughter Chandra Prava (whom he soon made his senior queen). He also captured a large booty, including the golden picture of Bishalakshyee, still adored by the Bishnupur Raj and brought out to the temple of Mrinmoyee during the Durga puja every year. He also brought a Mahomedan lady (according to some, the wife of Rahim Khan), named Lal Bai, from the palace of Shova Singha. Thus Raghunath rendered a great service to the cause of the Moguls. The Rajas of Bishnupur were always allies of the Moguls. They had a large army of brave and well-trained soldiers; and the fort of Bishnupur was always considered an impregnable one; and neither the Pathans nor the Moguls could ever pierce the fortification. It is said that on one occasion Keerti Chandra (the son and successor of Jagatram), Raja of Burdwan, laid siege to the fort of Bishnupur, but was totally repulsed. "During the greater part of the Mogul supremacy the Bishnupur Rajas were principally tributary princes who kept the western frontier of lower Bengal against the Hillmen. Even under the fiscal policy of Mushid Kuli Khan (1704—1726) the Bishnupur Raja was one of the magnates exempted from its despotic regulations." (25).

Lal Bai.—Lal Bai was an accomplished lady of matchless beauty. She was a good musician and her sweet voice very soon won the love and attachment of the Raja. He had a palace built for her on the site

of the present burning ghat near the fort. The remains of the building and of a tank are still to be seen (26). He also excavated the magnificent Lalband, which was named after the king's paramour. The King began to keep constant company with this Mahomedan lady and left almost all the affairs of the state in the hands of his ministers. Though a descendant of devout Vaishnavas like Beera Hambeera and Beera Singha, he gave up all his religious principles and even began to partake of the same dish with the Mahomedan lady. Once that lady asked him to accept Islam with his whole kingdom, threatening to leave Bishnupur if he refused (27). It was not easy for a man to change his religion and Raghunath was very puzzled to know what to do. The threat, however, was too much for him. So he reluctantly acceded to her proposal. Soon Lal Bai was busy making arrangements for a great feast to be held at Bhojantala (28) in token of the conversion of the whole kingdom to the Religion of the Prophet. The news spread far and wide and there was unrest everywhere. In order to escape

(26) Some 25 years ago, when the tank was reexcavated, a human skeleton and some broken Mahomedan utensils were dug out from the bottom.

(27) According to another story, Lal Bai, on the occasion of the first rice ceremony of her son, requested the king to feed all the Brahmans of the kingdom in the same way as they had been fed on similar occasions in the case of the sons of the other queens. In this way she tried to bring about their conversion by cunning.

(28) The part of the town just to the west of Nutan Mahal (the cremation ground) is still known by the name of Bhojantola (a place for feasts).

conversion, Gopal Singha and the senior queen, on the advice of the grandees of the town, resolved to get the king murdered with his evil genius, the Mahomedan lady. The king was sent for by the queen, and was murdered by Gopal Singha and his men, and the Mahomedan lady was put in chains and drowned in the tank of her own palace; the building also was totally demolished (29). Then the queen burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her murdered husband and is still known by the name of *Pati-Ghatini-Sati* (A devoted wife who murders her own husband).

(29) There is a tradition that when Raghu Nath was attacked by the ruffians, he made a counterattack on them (one of the blows missed its aim; and there was a mark in the palace wall, which, was made by it) and tried to jump out of the palace. But he fell inside the enclosure of the deer, who killed him with their horns.

There is another tradition, that the senior queen shot the king with an arrow when the latter was busily arranging the feast and then burnt herself alive on the funeral pyre of her husband. The funeral place (on the eastern side of Shyama-band lake) is still known by the name of *Satikurd* (*Satikunda*—The funeral place of the *Sati*).

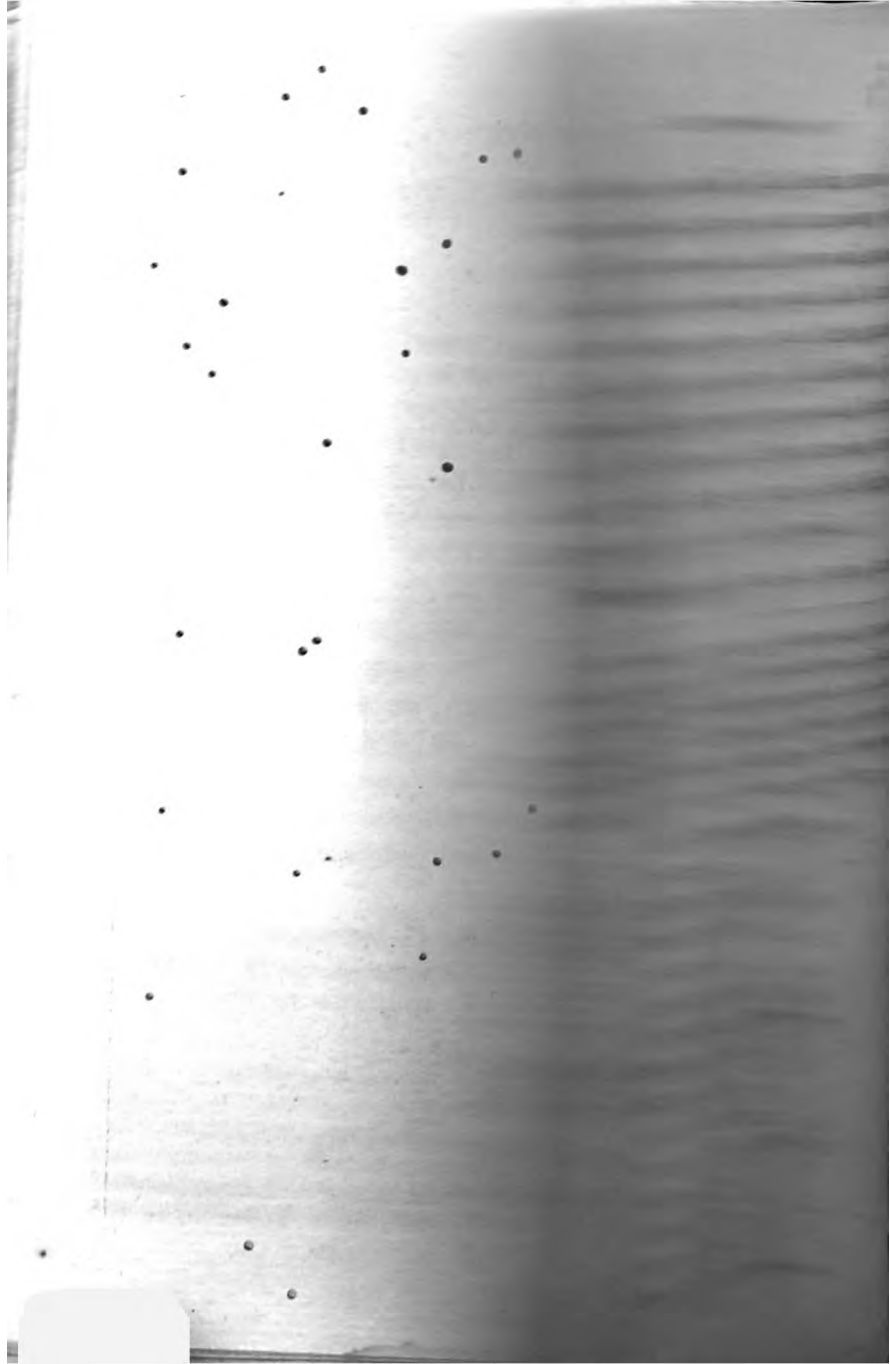
CHAPTER IV.

DECLINING AGE.

Internal Weakness.—Mallabhoom rose to the zenith of its power in the reign of Raghunath Singha. The kingdom then reached to its fullest extent. The military renown of the Mallas was at its highest point; and the Malla king was treated as a powerful ally by the Moguls. The kingdom became very rich especially with the spoils of war. The capital city was decorated most artistically with lovely temples, lakes and pleasure gardens. This flourishing age was ominously cut short by the murder of the king. Yet the period that immediately followed showed no outward sign of decay and downfall. In the next reign we find that the religious development of the kingdom begun by Beera Hambeera was completed. But the country began to show signs of internal weakness on the other hand. Of all religions, Gauria-Vaishnavism is the most incompatible with bloody strife and fierce justice. The more devoted the Mallas were to their mild and self-sacrificing doctrine of Vaishnavism, the more incompetent they became to hold the reins of government. Their lofty spirit of quiet resignation was prompting them to leave everything to the divine will of Vishnu. So long as the sincerity of the followers of the religion was not contaminated by hypocrisy there was no danger at all. But the lofty spirit of Vaishna-

vism, too high for the mass to follow, soon degenerated into various forms of effeminacy. The universal love which alone can lead us to salvation was twisted into illicit love by immoral and irreligious persons. Thus Vaishnavism, which was the cause of the real glory of Mallabhoom, became also one of the undermining causes of its decay and downfall.

Gopal Singha.—Gopal Singha, the next king, ascended the throne in 1018, M.E. (1712, A.D.). He was a devout Vaishnava. He made the worship of Vishnu (by counting beads) compulsory among his subjects. A strong system of espionage made this compulsion effective. Even day-labourers who had to pass the whole day in hard labour could not evade the compulsory worship imposed by Gopal Singha. Even now the word "*Gopal-Sing-ar-bagar*" (the compulsory worship by Gopal Singha's order) is current in the locality, and is used to mean indifferent and negligent religious services. There is a story that once a carpenter was returning home after finishing his day's work. Gopal Singha, in disguise, began to follow him. The carpenter reached his homestead and told his wife that he was unwell. The wife prepared a bed and told him to rest a while. But the carpenter said in a grumbling tone "'*Gopal-Sing-ar-bagar*' is yet to be done." Gopal Singha overheard this and the next morning he sent for the carpenter. The carpenter reached the king shaking with fear and was asked about the events of the previous evening. The carpenter hesitatingly confessed that the excessive



in 1632, M.E. (1726, A.D.). It is situated on the eastern side of Lalband. Another temple was built by his son Krishna Singha (who died in the

জয় জগবন্ধু করুণা সিদ্ধ
অহর দলন মুরারী জী ।
শেষ মহেশ্বর নৃপ আদি নারদ
কেও তব অন্ত না পাওয়ে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
রাজিত পিত বসন বন মোহন
যশদাকো সাধ পুরাওয়ে জী ।
নিরন্তরাস মহারস মেশন
পূর্ণপাওয়ে ব্রজ বালা জী ॥ আরে ও.....
তার ব্রহ্ম পুরুষোত্তম মাধব
জিনিকে ভকত হৃদামা জী ।
যমুনা এটমে ধেনু চরাওয়ে
যদে লয়ে ব্রজ বালা জী ॥ আরে ও.....
গোয়ালিনী কিসে লীলা কিয়ে
আগোপাল কানাইয়া জি ॥
বৃন্দাবনমে রাস রচাওয়ে
যদে লয়ে ব্রজ নারী জী ॥ আরে ও.....
কলিতা বিশাখা অডির চন্দ্রাবলি
বাধা রূপ মন প্যারী জী ।
তিনি রাধা জোরে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
পাঁহে পাতাল কালীনাগ মাথে
কপীপর নৃত্য করাওয়ে জী ।
অজ্ঞেয় তার হুঃশাসন মার
জ্যোতীকো চীর বাড়াওয়ে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
জীধর কৃষ্ণ রাঘব বিষ্ণু
চন্ডেন নায়ক সিংহ জী ।
পূরী অযোধ্যা সরযুকে তীরে
নীতা শ্রীরঘু বীরোজী ॥ আরে ও.....
ভয় বন গোবিন্দ কহ মন রাম
বাঁধা ভুলসী শালগ্রাম ॥ আরে ও.....

[শ্রীভোলানাথ দাস, গায়ক; রঘুনাথ সায়ের ।]

labour of the day, intensified by his feeling unwell in the evening, made him grumble at the compulsory worship. The Raja was pleased with his answer and granted him lands for his maintenance to enable him to make time for the religious services. Gopal Singha granted lands to many other inhabitants of Mallabhoom. The Brahmans and Vaishnava singers were specially favoured by him (1). Abbe Raynal, the French traveller, visited Bishnupur, probably during the reign of Gopal Singha. His account is to be found in the Appendix.

Temples.—Gopal Singha made the temple, named

(1) In the morning and evening the Vaishnavas sang throughout the town religious songs, some of which were introduced into Bishnupur from Brindaban. These Vaishnavas were granted rent-free lands by Gopal Singha. Even to the present day they sing religious songs during the three holy months of the Bengali year. One of these songs (probably adapted from a song of Brindaban) is given below :—

আরে ও একবার ভজমন গোবিন্দ হরে
 হরে—হরে—হরে—
 প্রভু নিত্যানন্দ চৈতন্ত হই ॥
 ভজ গোবিন্দে পরমানন্দে
 কহ গোবিন্দে রামাজী ।
 রাম কৃষ্ণ গোপাল দামোদর
 হরে মাধব মধুসূদনজী ॥ আরে ও.....
 রাধা মাধব মদন গোপাল
 অধ্বজ লোচন বেহুসাল ।
 ময়ূর মুকুটোপরি জয়ন্তি মালা
 কর পর মুরলী ধারী ভী ॥ আরে ও.....
 নন্দকী নন্দন গোবিন্দে
 যশদা নন্দন গোবিন্দে
 রাসবিলাসক গোবিন্দে
 বৃন্দাবন বাসী গোবিন্দে ॥ আরে ও.....

Jora-mandir in 1632, M.E. (1726, A.D.). It is situated on the western side of Lalband. Another temple was dedicated by his son Krishna Singha (who died in the

জয় জগবন্ধু করুণা সিদ্ধ
অম্বর দলন মুরারী জী ।
শেব মহেশ্বর নৃপ আদি নারদ
কেও তব অন্ত না পাওয়ে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
রাজিত পিত বসন বন মোহন
বশদাকো সাধ পুরাওয়ে জী ।
নিরন্তরাস মহারস মেশন
গুণগাওয়ে ব্রজ বালা জী ॥ আরে ও.....
তার ব্রহ্ম পুরুষোত্তম মাধব
জিনিকে ভকত হৃদামা জী ।
বমুনা এটমে ধেমু চরাওয়ে
সঙ্গে লয়ে ব্রজ বালা জী ॥ আরে ও.....
গোয়ালিনী কিসে লীলা কিরে
ঐগোপাল কানাইরা জি ॥
বৃন্দাবনমে রাস রচাওয়ে
সঙ্গে লয়ে ব্রজ নারী জী ॥ আরে ও.....
ললিতা বিশাখা অডির চন্দ্রাবলি
রাধা রূপ মন প্যারী জী ।
জিনি রাধা জোরে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
পঁহছে পাতাল কালীনাগ মাথে
কলীপর নৃত্য করাওয়ে জী ।
গজেন্দ্র তার দুঃশাসন মার
দ্রোপদীকো চীর বাড়াওয়ে জী ॥ আরে ও.....
ঐধর কৃষ্ণ রাঘব বিষ্ণু
লচমন নারক সিংহ জী ।
পুরী অবোধ্যা সরযুকে তীরে
সীতা ঐরঘু বীরোজী ॥ আরে ও.....
ভদ্র মন গোবিন্দ কহ মন রাম
পদ্মা তুলসী শালগ্রাম ॥ আরে ও.....

[ঐভোলানাথ দাস, গায়ক; রঘুনাথ সায়ের ।]

life-time of his father) to Radha Gobinda in the year 1035, M.E. (1729, A.D.). This temple is situated to the west of the temple of Kalachand. Churda-moni, the wife of Krishna Singha, also founded the temple of Radha Madhaba in the year 1043, M.E. (1737, A.D.). This temple is situated on the southern side of Lalband (2).

Mahratta Invasion.—During the reign of Gopal Singha, the Mahrattas under Bhaskar Pandit appeared at the gates of Bishnupur (1742) and encamped on the site of the present subdivisional court, which is still known by the name *Mahrattalanga*. The soldiers of the Bishnupur-Raj tried to drive them off in vain, so Gopal Singha entered the fort with all his men and ordered a public prayer to Madan Mohan, by singing the holy names of God to the accompaniment of music. The Mahrattas found the fort impregnable and retired without being able to pierce the strong fortification. There is a tradition that Madan Mohan fired the celebrated cannon *Dal Mardan* (still in existence on the southern side of the H. E. school building) and drove away the Mahrattas (3). The Mahrattas then directed their activity

(2) Inscription—

১ শ্রীকৃষ্ণঃ।

মল্লাক্ষে গুণবেদধেনু মিনিতে শ্রীরাধিকা মাধব প্রীতৈ

সৌধমিনঃ সুখাংসুবিমলং মাঘে দদৌ চিত্রিতং।

শ্রীশ্রীমল্লমহী মহেন্দ্র গুণবিলোপাল সিংহাস্ত্রজ

শ্রীলশ্রীযুক্ত কৃষ্ণসিংহ মহিষী শ্রীশ্রীল চূড়ামণিঃ।

সন ১০৪৩ সাল।

(3) See Appendix III C.

towards the less protected parts of the country and ravaged villages and towns with inhuman cruelty. But having been defeated near Katwa, "Bhaskar Rao retreated to the passes of Panchet, but, having lost his way in the hilly forest-clad tracts, he came back to the jungles of Bishnupur, and thence made good his retreat to Chandrakona and emerged in the open country round Midnapur. This was not the last appearance of the Marathas at Bishnupur." (4).

Chaitanya Singha.—A few years after the Mahratta raids Gopal Singha died and was succeeded by Chaitanya Singha (1054, M.E., 1748, A.D.). Chaitanya Singha reigned for some years in peace. He also was a devout Vaishnava. He granted lands to various religious institutions, such as, toles, temples, etc. "He made large grants to Brahmans, so much so that, if a Brahmin in the Raj had no rent-free grant, it was open to question whether he was a true Brahman" (District Gazetteer, Bankura). He was a good king and always a promoter of the material and moral welfare of his subjects. But his religious disposition made him unfit to cope successfully with the troubles which now arose. He spent his time in religious meditation and discussion, leaving the state affairs in the hands of his favourite minister Kamal Biswas, better known by the proud title of *chhatrapoti*.

Family dissension.—Damodar Singha another grandson of Gopal Singha, taking advantage of the situation advanced claims to the Raj. He went to Murshidabad

(4) District Gazetteer, Bankura—p. 29.

and succeeded in obtaining a strong force from Siraj-ud-daulā. This force was ignominiously routed by Kamal Biswas, the general of Chaitanya Singha at Sanghatgola on the bank of the Damodar in the North of Mallabhoom. Damodar Singha narrowly escaped with his life; and succeeded in securing the help of the new Nawab Mir Jaffar Khan, who furnished him with a stronger force. He then advanced cautiously and stealthily, and, after overcoming a feeble resistance on the way, surprised Bishnupur at the dead of night. Chaitanya Singha managed to escape with the family god Madan Mohan by a private gate and first went to the Nawab at Murshidabad. But knowing that the East India Company had received the grant of the Burdwan chakla in 1760, he proceeded to the English at Calcutta. Here at Calcutta, having spent all his money in conducting the case in the court of the English (with the help of the Dewan Ganga Gobinda Singha) he had to pawn the idol Madan Mohan to Gokul Mitra of Bagbazar, Calcutta, originally an inhabitant of Konnagar, who had made his fortune through trading in salt. The English governor Clive, finding the law of primogeniture prevalent in Bishnupur, decided in favour of Chaitanya Singha. Chaitanya Singha came to Bishnupur with the decree of Clive and got possession of the kingdom (now reduced to an ordinary zamindari). Damodar Singha went away to Jamkundi on a monthly pension (5).

(5) Damodar Singha established a Zamindari at Jamkundi. His descendants Cheta Singha, Narsing Singha and Surendra Nath Singha

Mahrattas trying to establish a Hindu Empire in India.—Ghaitanya Singha was not only troubled with family dissensions, but was totally ruined by the Mahratta raids. Before the disaster of Panipat (III, 1761) the Mahrattas tried to establish an Empire in India, after driving away the Europeans. Thus they brought the nominal Emperor Shah Alam II under their influence and sent Shiobhat with an army to support him. Shiobhat suddenly advanced towards Midnapur and “pushed forward a detachment to Bishnupur, wherefrom he threatened Burdwan. The Emperor marched south towards Murshidabad, while Shiobhat came with the main body of Mahrattas to Bishnupur. Meanwhile, the Nawab Mir Jaffar Khan, having advanced towards Burdwan, effected a junction with the British force under Major Caillaud. The advance of the latter appears to have upset Shah Alam’s plans. Instead of forcing his way to Murshidabad, he drew off his troops, set fire to his camp, and retired with his Mahratta allies to Bishnupur, where the English, having no cavalry and receiving no support from that of the Nawab, were unable to follow him. Thence the Emperor marched off with Shiobhat to Patna, after receiving the homage of the Raja of Bishnupur. A small force was left at Bishnupur, but at the close of the year was cleared out by an English force” (District Gazetteer, Bankura). The Bishnupur Raj was put to constant trouble by the Mahrattas for about a quarter

(son of Rai Radhaballav Singha Dev Bahadur of Kuchiakol), etc. inherited the Zamindary in succession.

of a century. The country was greatly impoverished by their repeated attacks; and life and property became very unsafe—so much so that the cultivators did not think it worth while to grow corn to be trampled under the foot of the Mahratta horse. The revenue of the kingdom fell abnormally, and the Bishnupur Raj knew not how to meet the demands of the East India Company.

Famine.—The frequent family dissensions, which sometimes took the shape of pitched battles, and the horrible devastation of the Mahratta raids brought in the famine of 1770 as their natural consequence. We have seen that Chaitanya Singha was a good king, always devoted to the welfare of his subjects. His fatherly affection prompted him to give away everything he had to save them from starvation. Thus his treasury (Lakshmi-Ghar), was exhausted, and to his utter sorrow and disappointment he could not pay off the debt of Gokul Mitra to get back the Idol Madan Mohan (6).

Settlement with the English.—According to the new settlement, Chaitanya Singha was reduced to the status of a zamindar by the English. On account of the arrears of revenue the zamindary of Bishnupur came into the khas-possession of the Company in 1766; only a rent of Rs. 5,514-9-8 was left for the maintenance of Chaitanya Singha. Many rent-free lands were confiscated by the Company; but Mr. Dawson regranted many such lands

(6) By his decree No. 2696 for Rs. 7,337 As. 13 P. 6. Madan Mohan was bought by Gokul Mitra.

which are still known as "Dawsoni Chhar" or grants made by Dawson. Chaitanya Singha again took the zamindari of Bishnupur on an annual rent of Rs. 3,75,000. But Damodar Singha was a constant disturbing element; taking advantage of the disorders in the affairs of the Company, Damodar Singha once managed to procure a decree against Chaitanya Singha for half of the kingdom. But Chaitanya Singha appealed in the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* of Calcutta, where his claim was upheld (7).

Zamindari Sold.—At the time of the Decennial settlement, Chaitanya Singha got the settlement of Bishnupur on an exorbitant annual revenue of four lakhs of rupees (fearing that his rival Damodar Singha might surpass him by an offer of that amount). But he could not pay this high revenue, especially as the country had not yet regained its former position after the famine of 1770 and as the expenses for maintaining a large army, which was no longer required under the protection of the Company, were not curtailed. Thus the Bishnupur Parpana was split up into smaller estates, which were either sold or resettled under separate engagements. Even after these portions of the estate had been detached and sold, the succeeding Raja Madhaba Singha was unable to pay the assessed revenue, consequently the remaining portion

(7) "আবিরানের 'History of the East and West Indies' নামক গ্রন্থের মানচিত্রে (London Ed., 1776) বিশেণপুর (বিশুপুর) ও কলিকাতা এই দুইটা নগরের নাম বঙ্গ প্রদেশীয় লেফটেন্যান্ট গবর্ণরের অধিকৃত হানের মধ্যে বৃহদাকারে মুদ্রিত হইয়াছে।" বিশ্বকোষ Vol. 19 page 122.

of the Bishnupur Pargana still in the possession of the Raja was put up to auction on the 12th November, 1806, and was purchased by the Maharaja of Burdwan for Rs. 2,15,000.

During the reign of Chaitanya Singha (8) the temple of Radha Shyam was built and was dedicated in the year 1064, M.E. (1758, A.D.) (8) Chaitanya Singha could not reign in peace. The costly litigations (9) with Dambadar Singha constantly gave him trouble, the devastating raids of the Mahrattas, as well as the terrible famine which stripped the country of a third of the population, totally ruined him and his subjects. To fill the cup of his misery his eldest son Madan Mohan Singha died. Thus broken-hearted, Chaitanya Singha breathed his last only a few days after.

Early British Administration.—In 1760, the Burdwan 'Chakla' was ceded to the British by the Nawab of Bengal. But the British government had to undergo a great deal of trouble to restore peace and

(8) Inscription—শ্রীশ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণঃ ।

শ্রীরাধাশ্রাম চন্দ্রাবতী সরসিঙ্গতলে দিব্যমেতৎ স্থশোভং
মল্লাক্বে বেদ কালান্বয় বিধু গণিতে বাহুল্যে পৌরমাশ্রামঃ ।
গেহং নানাবিচিত্রবিমিতমতি দৃঢ়ং পুঞ্জিতকোপি ভট্টে
ঐচৈতন্তোন্মোহনঃ শুভকৃতি নিপুণো সম্প্রবচ্ছৎ সভারাম ॥

শকাব্দা: ১৬৮০ ।

(9) According to Sir William Hunter, the judge who decided one of these suits was "an ingenuous stripling of nineteen with whom 'equity and good sense' were supposed to make up for the want of a legal training and total ignorance of Law."—Annals of Rural Bengal.

order in Mallabhoom. The Mallas had ruled independently for over a thousand years; and it was quite natural for them that they would not easily come under the yoke of the English as peaceful subjects. Their martial spirit would not easily leave them. Their habit of managing their own affairs without interference from outside had grown deep in their character. The glorious history of their ancestors, defeating the Mahomedans and the Mahrattas in several bloody contests, was constantly prompting them to measure their strength with the British, of whose power and prestige they had but meagre idea. Their king Chaitanya Singha also was of an unyielding and stubborn nature, as Hunter writes in his Ms. Records: "In 1757, even after the battle of Plassey, we find the Raja of Bishnupur (Chaitanya Singha) exacting duties from the English themselves in spite of the orders of the submissive Nawab or Native Viceroy of Bengal." (10). (Home Department Records, proceedings of November 3, 1757). Thus many petty rebellions broke out successively in the locality of Mallabhoom for a period of about half a century—that is, it took two generations to damp the martial spirit of the country and to make the state of independence give way. The Government had to engage their sepōys frequently in order to disperse these unruly

(10) In Vol. IV of the same book (No. 15 G. Imperial Library, Calcutta), there is an index of a good many letters (which the humble author has not had the good luck of going through) showing long correspondence between the Government and the Bishnupur Raj.

men. Owing to this disturbed condition of the country, Mr. Pye was placed in charge of Bishnupur in 1786. "Next year Lord Cornwallis determined to unite Beerbhoom and Bishnupur into a compact British district; and in March, 1787 a notification was issued in the Calcutta Gazette to the effect that Mr. Pye was 'confirmed collector of Bishnupur in addition to Beerbhoom, heretofore superintended by G. R. Foley, Esq.'" (11). Mr. Pye remained in his post for a month or two; and even during this short period, Bishnupur was sacked by banditti. Mr. Sherburne, his successor, transferred the head quarters of the united districts from Bishnupur to Suri in Beerbhoom. During his short term of office "the frontier principalities had passed from the condition of military fiefs into that of a regular British district administered by a collector and covenanted assistants, defended by the Company's troops, studded with fortified factories, intersected by a new military road, and possessing daily communication with the Seat of Government in Calcutta."

Mr. Keating assumed charge of the united districts after Mr. Sherburne, who was removed under suspicion of corrupt dealings in 1788. We may have an idea of the duties of a district officer of that time from Hunter's account in *Rural Bengal*. "Mr. Christopher Keating, as Collector, Magistrate, and Civil Judge, ruled with an absolute sway over 7,500 square miles, and made his

(11) District Gazetteer, Bankura—p. 31.

policy felt by the hill tribes many a day's march beyond his frontier. The district naturally divided itself into two parts—the Raja's of Birbhūm's territory on the north of Adjī and Raja of Bishnupur's on the south. Mr. Keating directed the movements of the troops, received the rent of the cultivators, decided civil suits, purveyed for military detachments passing through his district, inflicted punishment on petty offenders, sent heinous ones in chains to the Muhammadan law officer, and acted as cashier to a great commercial company. It would be unreasonable to look for perfect finish in walls whose builders held the plummet in one hand and the sword in the other and if the administration of such men as Mr. Keating was effective on the whole, it is as much as an after generation, which works at great leisure and with more complete machinery, has a right to expect."

In the same book we find an account of the administration of Mr. Keating and we understand to a certain extent what a tremendous damage was caused by the rebellions of unruly men.

"Mr. Keating, the first Collector whose records survive, had not enjoyed his appointment two months before he found himself compelled to call out the troops against a band of marauders five hundred strong, who 'had made a descent on' a market town within two hours' ride from the English capital, and murdered or frightened away the inhabitants 'of' between thirty and forty villages.' A few weeks later (February, 1789), the hillmen broke

through the cordon of outposts *en masse*, and spread 'their depredation throughout the interior villages of the district.' Panic and bloodshed reigned, the outposts were hastily recalled from the frontier passes; and on the 21st of February, 1789, we find Mr. Keating levying a militia to act with the regulars against the banditti who were sacking the country towns 'in parties of three and four hundred men, well found in arms.' The evil was not to be so easily dealt with, however, and the Governor-General in Council had eventually to direct the collectors of the several adjoining districts to unite their whole forces; all questions of jurisdiction were sunk; a battle was fought and the banditti were chased far into the mountains. But a piece of petty official jealousy prevented the success from being complete. The confederates had omitted to take the Collector of a neighbouring district into their councils, and the bandits found shelter within his jurisdiction. 'By a wounded Sepoy, who is arrived from our parties,' wrote the indignant Mr. Keating, 'I understand they have had a smart skirmish with the thieves near the borders of Pacheate; but in their pursuit were stopped by the collector's guards, who, instead of assisting the business, prevented their advancing into that district, and sheltered some of the banditti's followers. The Sepoy tells me that, in consequence of (this interference by) the Pacheate people, ours have thought it expedient to seize four or five of them who are coming in to answer for their conduct.' The wrath of the Pacheate Collector at the capture of his guards by

a military force in time of peace, and the mutual reproaches which followed, may easily be conceived.

"The disorders in Bishenpor^y would, in any less troubled time, have been called rebellion. The Rajah had been imprisoned for the arrears of land-tax; the head assistant to the Collector, Mr. Hesilrige, was in charge of his estates, and the inhabitants made common cause with the banditti to oppose the Government. In June, 1789, a detachment was hurried out to support the civil power; eight days afterwards a reinforcement followed, too late, however; to save the chief manufacturing town in the district from being sacked in open day light. Next month Mr. Keating reported to Government that the marauders, having crossed the Adji in 'a large party armed with tulwars (swords) and matchlocks,' had established themselves in Beerbhoom, and that their reduction would simply be a question of military force.

"The rainy season, however, came to the aid of the authorities. The plunderers, laden with spoil, and leaving a sufficient force to hold Bishenpore as a basis for their operations in the next cold weather, retreated to their strongholds; and Mr. Keating took advantage of the lull to devise a more elaborate system for warding the frontier. He represented to Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General, that the existing military force was insufficient to hold the district; that the contingents furnished by the hereditary wardens of the marches were undisciplined, faint-hearted, more disposed to act with the

plunderers than against them; and that to secure peace to the lowlands, it was absolutely necessary to station a guard of picked soldiers from the regular army at each of the passes. A nucleus would thus be formed, round which the irregular troops might gather. By return of post, with a promptitude that lets us into the secret of Lord Cornwallis' success as an Indian administrator, came back an answer 'that the Commander-in-chief has been requested to detach' a sufficient force which the Collector 'will station at the different ghauts (passes), through which the Dacoits generally make their inroads into the low country.' In November, the six most important passes were occupied, a detachment was stationed in Bishenpore, another occupied the chief manufacturing town on the Adji (the one that had been sacked the previous summer), to prevent the banditti from crossing the river. The Adji divides the united district into two parts, Bishenpore on the south, Berbhoom on the north; and these measures, while they restored comparative quiet to the former, left the latter defenceless. 'Scarce a night passes' wrote Mr. Keating, 'without some daring robbery.' The military, harassed by night marches, and scattered about in small bands, were unable to cope with the banditti, or even to protect the principal towns. On the 25th of November, 1789, the commanding officer reported that only four men remained to guard the Government offices in the capital; and a few weeks later he declared himself unable to furnish an escort sufficient to ensure the safety of a treasure party through the district.

At length, on the 5th of June, Raj-Nagar, the ancient capital and the seat of the hereditary princes, fell into the hands of the banditti. More than five centuries had elapsed since a similar calamity had befallen Beerbhoom. In 1244, A.D. the wild tribes from the south-west had sacked the city, and history, repeating itself in the fortunes of the obscurest district not less faithfully than in the revolutions of empires, discloses the same outrages at the close as at the commencement of the Mussalman rule.

“ Mr. Keating’s position was a difficult one. He had to guard Bishenpore, on the south of Adji, Beerbhoom on the north, and above all, the passes along the western frontier. Beerbhoom, as the head quarters of the English power, was of the first importance; but if he called in the troops from Bishenpore, the calamities of the preceeding year would be repeated; and if he withdrew the outposts from the western passes, the entire district, north and south, would be at the mercy of the hill-men. He decided that it was better to let the marauders riot for a time on the south of Adji, than to open up his entire frontier. An express summoned the detachments from Bishenpore by forced marches to the rescue of Beerbhoom; but no sooner had they crossed the river than tidings came that Bishenpore was itself in the hands of ‘insurgents assembled in number nearly one thousand.’ The rebellion spread in the adjoining jurisdictions, and the Collectors on the south bitterly reproached Mr. Keating with having sacrificed the peace of many districts for

the sake of maintaining intact the outposts along the frontier of his own. The more strictly these passes were guarded, the greater number of marauders who flocked by circuitous route into the unprotected country on the south of Adji. Their outrages passed all bounds; the approaching rains, by suspending military operations, threatened to leave them in possession of Bishenpore for several months; till at last the peasantry, wishing for death rather than life, rose against the oppressors whom they had a year ago welcomed as allies, and the evil began to work its own cure. The marauders of Bishenpore underwent the fate of the Abyssinian slave-troops in Bengal three hundred years before, being shut out of the walled cities, decoyed into woods by twos and threes, set upon by bands of infuriated peasants, and ignobly beaten to death by clubs. In mid summer 1790 Mr. Keating ordered the senior captain 'to station a military guard with an officer at Bishenpore, whose sole business I propose to be that of receiving all thieves and Dacoits that shall be sent in.'

"Thus ended the first two years of which we possess, a complete record of British rule in Beerbhoom. From their calamities we can imagine what had gone before. The amount of property destroyed by the plunderers may be estimated from an entry in a state document drawn up a few years previously. 'Deduct' saith the deed for the Benares district for the year, 1782, 'deduct the devastations, etc. of two month's disturbances, Sicca rupees 6,66,666-10-10 or over £70,000 sterling. If this

were the result of two months, what must have been the destruction during two years?"

The Rebellion of 1798.—This rebellion broke out in the time of Chaitanya Singha in the south-eastern part of Mallabhoom. In the month of June, fifteen hundred men made their appearance at Raipur, set fire to the bazar and kachari; and overran the place and it was necessary to send a body of Sepoys to keep the peace of the place. The banditti beat back the Sepoys, who were sent under a native commissioned officer. Then a larger body of Sepoys was sent under an European officer. But the zaminders and other influential men of the place would neither supply the Sepoys with provision nor give them any information regarding the rebels. Rather, they would help the rebels and would sometimes give them shelter in their mud forts. The Sepoys also were reported to have plundered the ryots. Durjan Singha, the ex-zamindar of Raipur, was the leader of this rebellion. His object was to harass the purchaser of his sold zamindary, by preventing the latter from gaining possession. Once Durjan Singha was captured and put to trial, but was soon released, as no one dared to appear against him. Such was the combination of the people for the old Rajas of the place. There were also many other such rebellions. The parganas of Ambikanagar and Supur were also overrun by banditti. And for sometime it was the constant unpleasant task of the Collector to depute Sepoys to pacify the country, whenever intelligence was sent to him by the police officers.

The Rebellion of Madhaba Singha.—The estate having been sold away, Madhaba Singha had to maintain with great difficulty the Raj family and the religious institutions on the revenue of the *Babuan* lands (lands granted rent-free by the previous kings to their relatives) and *Debottar* lands (lands granted for the maintenance of the idols) possessed by him as a *sabait*. Madhaba Singha in his distress raised the standard of rebellion and imitated the example of Durjan Singha of Raipur. He had also a large band of discontented men to support his cause and to spread death and depredation in the villages all round. He went so far as even to attack the Collectorate of Bankura. The result was that he and his followers were totally defeated. He became a captive in the hands of the Sepoys and was sent to Calcutta as a prisoner and he had to remain in prison till death.

Ganga Narayani Hangama.—As has been already noted, the unruly men of the place were always on the look-out for an opportunity to create disturbance in the country. Ganga Narayana of Beerbhoom, being aggrieved at the decision of the court regarding his succession, raised a standard of rebellion in 1832. This gave these unruly men a nice plea to carry on their plundering operations. Very soon Ganga Narayana had a large following. The officials and police fell back to Burdwan and for some time Ganga Narayana had the whole country at his entire mercy. His followers were sacking every place worth plundering, and were killing mercilessly every one who ventured to oppose them. At last a strong force

was collected and military operations against these insurgents commenced. The banditti could not stand against these soldiers and were very soon driven to hills and forests. Ganga Narayana fled to Singhbhoom, where he died, and peace and order was once more brought to the country. The dreadful stories of this Ganga Narayani Hangama are still told in the locality of Mallabhoom; and the people still hear with interest the pathetic stories of death and depredation caused by the merciless followers of Ganga Narayana. As a result of this rebellion the District of the Jangal Mahals was broken up, for the better administration of peace and justice.

Sepoy Mutiny.—During the mutiny of 1857 the District of Bankura was almost free from any kind of disturbance. "There was for some time much apprehension regarding the Sheikhawati Battalion, of which a detachment was stationed at Bankura, an uneasiness increased by the vicinity of Chota Nagpur, where the main body was, and by a fear of an outbreak amongst the chuars and Santals inhabiting the country about Bankura. The distrust of the Battalions appears, however to have passed away gradually; and in October, when there was again some fear of an outbreak among the Santals, a wing was gladly welcome at Bankura and served to allay the anxiety that was felt." (12). It is said that on one occasion the mutineers from Purulia were to come to Bankura to join with the Sepoys; and a

(12) District Gazetteer, Bankura.

feeling of unrest also spread among the Sepoys stationed at Bankura. The mutineers could not come in time and the Sepoys of Bankura were pacified by Ray Gadadhar Chandra Banerjee Bahadur (13) for whom they had a deep regard. It is said that Gadadhar entertained the Sepoys with feast and music for a day or two; and in this way he diverted them till a detachment from Calcutta came and the possibility of a rebellion was gone.

The subsequent history of Mallabhoom presents little of interest. The only event worth noting is the formation of the district of Bankura. Numerous changes in the jurisdiction of the district took place, which need not be particularised. In October, 1879, the district had acquired its present dimension. But the district judgeship was given the name of Bankura only in 1881.

The Successors of Chaitanya Singha.—Gopal Singha, the minor son of the captive Raja Madhaba Singha, was quite helpless. But the company took pity on him and

(13) Rai Gadadhar Chandra Banerjee Bahadur was an inhabitant of Ajodhya—a village about six miles north-west of Bishnupur. He started a number of indigo firms and made an immense fortune. He bought many zamindaries and became the first man in the district. His charity is still praised by everybody. He fed *lacs* of Brahmans and during the famine of 1866 he fed the starving population of his zamindary. He erected buildings at the holy places of Benares and Brindaban to shelter pilgrims. He dedicated temples to idols and endowed properties for their maintenance and even opened *Anna Satras* where strangers and disabled persons could find food and shelter. The manner of living of the Malla Rajas, Gopal Singha and Chaitanya Singha, influenced the great-men of the locality; and we find several zamindars aspiring to bestow landed properties on idols and even to open *Anna Satras* in their temples.

granted him a pension of Rs. 400 a month. Gopal Singha lived to a good old age and died in peace in 1876, leaving two sons Ramkrishna Singha and Ramkishore Singha—who were granted pensions of Rs. 200 each. Ramkrishna died childless leaving two widows. The first widow made over her personal properties (Havanama) to Nilmani Singha (son of Raghunath Singha Deva of Kuchiakole) who died in the year 1904, leaving a widow and a minor son. The widow gets a pension of Rs. 50 only and the minor Ramchandra Singha got Rs. 25 from the Government as his educational expense till his sad premature death in February, 1919. The other widow of Ramkrishna—Prasannamayee Devi and a daughter of Ramkishore Singha get a monthly pension of Rs. 50 and Rs. 60 respectively. Nimai Singha, another son of Chaitanya Singha, established a zamindary at Kuchiakole. He was well versed in Sanskrit and was of a charitable disposition like his illustrious father Chaitanya Singha. He was a master of music. He wrote Ragmala (the Ms. of which has been lost). His son Beera Singha also inherited the benevolent spirit of the Mallas and had a charitable Aurvadic dispensary for the poor and the needy. He passed his whole day in meditation and disposed of the business of the zamindary at night. The next in descent was Rai Radha Ballav Singha Dev Bahadur, the founder of the Radhaballav Institution—one of the best H. E. Schools of the district—as well as of a Girl School and an M. V. School. His son is Babu Jogendra Nath Singha Dev, the founder

of a charitable dispensary at Kuchiakole. He is always hospitable and even now the hungry and the homeless find food and shelter at his doors. His appearance is very noble and contains some of the features of his illustrious ancestors. He has neither son nor grandson and his charitable disposition may prompt him to give away everything he has for the benefit of the poor and the needy (14).

Conclusion.—Thus ends the story of the mighty Mallas who in the palmy days of their ascendancy held sway over a vast country extending over the whole of Bankura and parts of the neighbouring districts and held their position as allies of the mighty Moghuls and even exacted duties from the English merchants. Such is the course of history; historians often see such rise and fall of kingdoms with indifference, without any feeling of pleasure and pain. The mighty Hindu kingdoms of the days of yore are no more: the Pathans are gone; the Moguls traced the same path: the Mahrattas lost themselves in the same course. History is constantly changing. The world in the evening is not the same the next morning. History always follows its own course in the formation and destruction of kingdoms, making us feel the transitoriness of human happiness and misery. It thus teaches us the highest of philosophy. But its easy

(14) Descendants of the dynasty are to be found at Bishnupur, Indas, Jamkundi, Kuchiakole, etc. Even now, they retain a stronghold on the affection of the people, and it is not forgotten that their ancestors were the rulers of the land. They are still honoured by the people with the titles—"Babu Saheb," "Babu," "Huzur," etc.

inductive method of teaching by examples makes it a popular subject, easy of understanding even to the ordinary cultivator. Thus writes the Hindu sage—

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणाम् उपदेश समन्वितम् ।

पुराणतत्त्वव्यायुक्तं इतिहासं प्रचक्षते ॥

History, though always changing, is not arbitrary in its course. There are always sound reasons for the minutest change. And here it will not be out of place to make a short review of some of the causes of the rise, growth and decline of the Mallas.

Every one knows that after the dissolution of Harshabardhan's Empire many petty kingdoms sprang up here and there all over India. Human society, as a rule, cannot stand without a king to maintain its rights as well as those of its individuals. Thus, when the central Government of Harsha became all chaos owing to the weakness of his successors and to the ambitious designs of adventurous men, the societies got their kings in those adventures who carved out small kingdoms of their own. In this way there arose many petty kingdoms, having no high moral or political motive to save the Indian Empire from the clutches of the Mahomedans, by effecting a union and forgetting their individual petty differences for a while. It was in this period that the Mallas established their supremacy in Mallabhoom.

We know from the history of India that the western kingdoms were soon conquered and annexed to the Mahomedan Empire. But such was not the case with our

Mallabhoom. This country was far away from Delhi, the centre of Mahomedan activity; and it was all surrounded with dense forest. Moreover Mallabhoom was not so fabulously rich as to attract the Mahomedans in the first instance. Also, Mallabhoom was exceptionally suited for self-defence, both owing to its geographical position and to the artificial fastnesses made by its skilful rulers. We have seen in the preceding chapters how the Mahomedans and the Mahrattas were repeatedly baffled in their attempts to take the fort. The fort was surrounded by ditches and a rampart seven miles in length all round the capital; and the storage of waters in the enbankments enabled the Malla kings to endanger an invading army. "As (for example) happened at the beginning of Suja Khan's government, who sent a strong body of horse to reduce him (the Malla king). These he suffered to advance far into his country, then opening the dams of the rivers destroyed them to a man." Moreover, it was not easy for an invader to pursue the Malla king through the dense forests and hills. Thus the Malla king remained independent up to the time of the Moguls; and even by the Moguls he was treated more as an ally than as dependent, as we have already seen. It was only in the early British period that the Mallas lost their independence. The Malla kings maintained their position for a thousand years. It must be said in all justice and propriety that the Malla kings were never self-seeking. They spent their wealth and energy for the sake of their religion and for the welfare of their

subjects. The costly temples lying all round the capital and bearing a strong contrast with their humble dwelling place, which scarcely deserves the name of a palace, show the religious zeal and the self-sacrificing spirit of the Mallas. The Mallas were always keen about the interests of their subjects and their religious pursuits—so much so that there is not a single Brahman or a high class Hindu family at or near Bishnupur who does not enjoy rent-free land even to the present day. The Malla kings were always the followers of universal law and justice. The liberal principles, they followed in the government of their kingdom, in the administration of justice, and in the maintenance of peace and order, were always admirable as will be seen in detail in the next chapter. It was owing to these sound principles and self-sacrificing spirit that the kingdom lasted for over a thousand years, though there was constantly a storm blowing violently in the world outside.

Various causes suggest themselves for the downfall of the mighty Mallas. The most important of these is the family dissension between Chaitanya and Damodar Singha. This difference at once undermined the kingdom by costly litigations and by maliciously raising the government revenue over the zamindari of Bishnupur to an exorbitant amount.

Thus according to Babu Balindra Nath Singha of Indas, a scion of the Raj-family (Bishnupur), the immediate causes of the decay and downfall were:—

- (1) The Mahratta raids,

- (2) The famine of 1770,
- (3) The imposition of a crushing land Tax by the British Government, and
- (4) Family Dissensions.

He also enumerated some indirect causes such as (5) the adoption of the Vaishnava cult and (6) its corollary, the construction of costly temples, etc.

We have already seen that the family dissension was the real cause of the crushing land Tax. In the early years of the British administration, the East India Company was always on the look out to exact the greatest amount possible. They did not care so much for the welfare of their subjects and for the improvement of the land as for their own pecuniary gain. Thus it was quite natural that the revenue over the zamindary of Bishnupur could not but be exorbitant, when Damodar Singha and Chaitanya Singha were both trying to beat the other by higher offers. Moreover the Mahratta raids impoverished the country by making beautiful villages abodes of wild beasts. "Their ravages have been graphically described in the Rayazu-s-Salatin:—'Sacking the villages and towns of the surrounding tracts, and engaging in slaughter and captures, they set fire to granaries, and spared no vestige of fertility. And when the stores and granaries of Burdwan were exhausted, and the supply of imported grain was also completely cut off, to avert death by starvation human beings ate plantain roots, whilst animals were fed on the leaves of trees. Even these gradually ceased to be available. For breakfast

and supper nothing except the disc of the sun and the moon feasted their eyes. The whole tract from Akbar-nagar (Rajmāhal) to Midnapur and Jaleswar (Jalasore) came into the possession of the Mahrattas. Those murderous free-booters drowned in the rivers a large number of the people, after cutting off their ears, noses and hands. Tying sacks of dirt over the mouths of others, they mangled and burnt them with indescribable tortures."

The famine of 1770 came in as the natural corollary of the Mahratta outrage. The Raja exhausted his treasury to the last farthing in order to save the starving population. Thus the government demands could not be satisfied, not only for the time being but for a long period to come. The deserted villages could produce nothing before they were repopulated and recultivated. Thus the Rajas of Bishnupur could not make up the loss caused by the famine of 1770. Even in this abnormal condition of the country the Rajas could not get the government revenue proportionally lowered, owing to the rivalry between the two leading men of the Raj-family. Thus their ruin was approaching nearer and nearer.

The Mallas were degenerated to a certain extent owing to their too high form of religion, Vaishnavism. As Babu Balindra Nath Singha writes "The adoption of the Vaishnavite creed, though it marked a brilliant epoch in the history of Mallabhoom, did not fail to exercise an enervating influence upon the royal followers. . . . before long symptoms of imbecility which would

be attributed to a religious frame of mind made themselves manifest." We have already seen that the too lofty spirit of Vaishnavism sometimes exercised a demoralising influence on the mass whose moral and religious standard was in general not very high. The costly temples also drained the treasury of the Malla kings. Moreover, the period was a period of transition. It was the end of the Mahomedan and the beginning of the British supremacy. So it was quite natural that old petty kingdoms like Mallabhoom should collapse in order to make room for the growing British Empire.

The Mallas have fallen and have fallen for ever. But under a Providential arrangement their dear kingdom and favoured subjects have been placed under the kind care of the benign British government. The country under the auspices of the mighty British has already shown signs of prosperity. Bishnupur, the capital of Mallabhoom, is joined by railway and telegraph with the centres of civilisation and has free scope for trade and commerce. The minds of the inhabitants have grown richer with the western education imparted to them. Many schools have been established with the help of the government; and a first-grade college has been founded at the district town by the Rev. J. Mitchell, the David Hare of Bankura. The District has been daily improving in every direction—sanitation, education, agriculture, industry, etc.—and hopes for the more spacious days which are in store for its people, in common with every other part of the province.

CHAPTER V.

GOVERNMENT AND CIVILISATION.

Introduction.—Of the early Malla Age we find but scanty materials to come to a right conclusion as to the civilization of Mallabhoom. But in the succeeding Age the materials are always ample to bear out its first-class civilization. We find that the Mallas were highly moral and religious in their principles of life. They had their compulsory religious service. Their government was simple and efficient and was based on the good will of the people. Their revenue system was excellent and their military and police system was founded on feudalism. The defensive works were constructed on sound military lines. Agriculture and commerce were in a prosperous condition. Architecture and sculpture were greatly cultivated and even now the results are praised by every body. Mallabhoom has greatly expedited the musical development of Bengal. Its literary activities were also of no less importance. The court life was gay and innocent and was more of a religious than of a political character. The life was full of enjoyment. There were Royal hunting, Royal dinners, Royal processions, etc., in which everyone took part. There were beautiful lakes for rowing and pleasure-gardens for walking. There were waterworks for supplying water to the Royal household. There were new games invented by

the Mallas. The festive days of the year were numerous. Living was cheap and all the necessities of life could be procured with but little labour and there was no keen struggle for existence as in the present day.

The Malla Era.—The Malla kings established an Era of their own. This Malla Era or *Malladba* dates from the establishment of the Raj by Adi Malla (695 A. D.). Thus the Malla year begins from the *Indra Dwadasi* day in the Bengali month of *Bhadra*, the day of the coronation of Adi Malla. This Era was employed in all the temples and documents of the Malla Raj. In the temple of Radha Shyama both the Malla and the Saka Eras are to be found in the inscription. From this we may independently find out the relation of the Malla Era with the other Eras current in India. The Malla Era is of great historical interest. It not only assures us of the correct position of events in the line of time but also bears testimony to the fact that the Malla kings were important enough to establish an Era of their own. We are not in a position to verify the opinion of Dr. Bloch who writes—"In one only of the temple inscriptions the equivalent of Malla Saka 1064 is given as Saka 1680, and thus the difference between the Malla Era and the Bengali Sal appears to be exactly 100 years. I suspect that the Malla year in other respects entirely followed the *fasli year* of Bengal and the Rajas of Bishnupur, out of vain glory, merely reduced the Bengali year by one hundred in order to establish a special era of their own. But this conjecture remains to be verified."

The Malla year does not entirely follow the Bengali year. The Malla year begins in the Bengali month of Bhadra from the Indra Dwadashi Day as has been already noticed.

Government.—No detailed and authentic account has yet been brought to light as to the government of Mallabhoom. The kingdom, we have found, was about the size of Wales and it was divided into a number of divisions, each of which was placed under a *Samanta Rāja* (subordinate king). The Malla king was in charge of the capital and the suburbs but could interfere, in urgent cases, in all the matters of the kingdom. The foreign relations of the kingdom was directly under him; only the internal management was placed under the charge of the *Samanta Rāja*. The Government was a form of monarchy, though the king allowed the people a large share in the affairs of the Government, especially in judicial and social matters.

The Central Government.—The Central Government was carried on by the Raja himself with the help of his ministers. There were a number of departments, each of which was placed under a minister. The Dewan was in charge of the Revenue department. The military department was also placed under the charge of the *Senapati* (commander-in-chief). The king himself was in charge of the judicial department, though justice was administered by the Panchayets, Patradharies and Mukhyas or headmen, in the first instance. There was also an agricultural and commercial department, which was also em-

powered to exact duties from foreign traders. The Malla king also established a sacred department for the moral and religious development of the people. This department was entirely in the hands of the high priest, who also advised the king in the matter of granting rent-free lands to idols and deserving persons. Besides these there were some other departments (such as public works, sanitation, etc.), which do not deserve special mention. All the different departments of the state were supervised by the king himself. We learn that there were a number of kings who breakfasted in the evening, after disposing of all the important matters relating to the kingdom which had been placed under their charge by Providence. In cases of an important nature the *Samanta Rajas* were also invited to give their opinion. There were also a number of concillors who advised the king in important matters of state. Shuvankar, the mathematician, was one of the councillors of the Malla king.

Local Governments.—The local governments were of the same type as the central government. The *Samanta Rajas* were all in all in their internal administration and they were never interfered with so long as they paid the prescribed revenue to the Central Government. The *Samanta Rajas* were generally of the Royal blood and were seen by the Malla king almost with an eye of equality. They had their own forts and army. Once a year, on the day of the Pushya Avisheka (in the Bengali month of Pous), they had to come to the Royal court to swear their allegiance to the Malla king. But they were

allowed proxy attendance, provided their revenue for the year had been properly paid and a suitable present had been sent to the king. They were also to give military aid to the Malla king in times of need. These *Samanta Rajaships* were many in number. Only some of them have been found out with the help of the tradition of the Raj and the remains of the temples and forts. They were Bagri, Simlapal, Jamkundi, Dharapat, Raipur, Indus, Chhatna, Maliara, Shurbhum, Dumni, Behar, Lego, Chandrakona, Garbetta, etc. All the divisions were not of equal size and importance; and the different *Samanta Rajas* were granted different degrees of power by the Malla king.

• **Self-Government.**—Self Government in Mallabhoom, was of a very remote origin and was very primitive in its nature. It was based on the ancient village system. The headman was to all practical purposes the king of the village. He decided civil and criminal disputes and was the head of society. He collected the donations at the time of the marriage and other social and religious ceremonies of the villages to meet the various expenses (for the Reader of the Bhagabata and the singers; for feeding the poor, etc.).

With the development of arts, various guilds were formed, each under its own Mukhya, who, like the headman, not only decided civil and criminal cases and social disputes, but also looked after the common property of the guild (the idol, meeting-hall, large utensils, lights, etc. for their caste-dinners; also the costly and common

tools of the guild) and the finance. He is even to the present day honoured with a high seat, and two betels instead of one. The Mukhyaship is generally hereditary, though a Mukhya can be dismissed for misconduct; but the first appointment was probably due to his exceptional skill in the art. The Mukhya even now calls the Guild-meetings. Sometimes all these village Mukhyas of Mallabhoom elected amongst themselves a Seromoni, who was honoured by every individual of that class of artisans and was paid a certain fee for his permission to allow anybody to hold a social or religious ceremony. There were also some Patradharies appointed by the king to decide certain class of cases and to maintain peace and order among their fellow-men.

Revenue System.—The revenue was generally paid in kind and most probably the currency system was very defective. In the early Malla period, when the Mallas were independent, we find no trace of their coins. From the sixteenth century onwards we know that the Malla kings were in constant touch with the Mahomedans and had to pay them revenue in rupees. Most probably, the Mahomedan coins were current in Mallabhoom from the sixteenth century onwards. The land revenue was low and lands were granted profusely to deserving men free of rent. Lands were also granted on numerous service tenures. "How numerous and varied they were may be gathered from a letter written in 1845 by the Raja of Bishnupur to the Judge of Bankura, in which he gave the following list and des-

cription of the various *panchaki mahals* which existed in the territory of his ancestor:—(1) *Senapati mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the commanding officers of the army. (2) *Mahal-bēra mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the guards of the Bishnupur fort. (3) *Chharidari mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the Raja's mace-bearers. (4) *Bakhshi mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by *bakhshis* or military paymasters. (5) *Kashtha-bhandar mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the supplier of fuel for the Raja's palace. (6) *Shagirdi-pesha mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by private servants of the Raja, such as *Khawas*, *Khidmatgars*, *namhatas*, *goraits*, etc. (7) *Krot mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the court officials of the Raja, such as the *Dewan*, etc. (8) *Topkhana mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by the gunners. (9) *Dom mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by drummers and musicians. (10) *Kaharan mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by palanquin bearers. (11) *Khatali mahal—panchak* paid for service lands held by coolies and labourers for working in the fort. (12) *Hatila mahal—panchak* paid for the sites of markets at Bishnupur. (13) *Be-talabi mahal—panchak* paid for lands granted by the Raja for charitable and religious purposes." The Dewan was in special charge of the Revenue department, though on occasions he posed as the prime minister.

Military and Police System.—The police and mili-

tary administrations were excellent. As far as we can infer from the remains of the feudal system still extant, we are inclined to believe that the police and military departments were the same. The same man maintained order in times of peace and took arms in times of war. There was also a standing army consisting of Turks. They encamped on the old site of 'Turki,' which got its name from them. The feudal system of military defence in Mallabhoom reminds us of that of the Norman period in England. The Malla kings divided the whole kingdom under a number of Ghats, and placed each under the charge of a Sirdar. The Sirdars had each a number of Ghatwals, Tabedors, and Digars, etc. under them. Whenever the appointed signal was given the whole militia had to obey it promptly on pain of the severest punishment. Thus the Malla kings were in a position to mobilise their units in urgent cases in the least possible time. The police system was excellent and the extracts from Abbé. Raynal's account, given in the appendix, will show how peaceful and orderly were the inhabitants of Mallabhoom. The British Government also tried to utilise the Ghatwali system, but, having found that the Ghatwals were combining with the thieves, at last confiscated most of the Ghatwali lands, though the system is still in vogue in some parts of the District. An exact statement of the numerical strength of the Army of Mallabhoom is almost an impossibility. But we may form some idea from the tradition that one Jugal Biswas led an army 22,000 strong

against a Mahomedan army. It is said that the Malla kings could easily collect an army of 100,000 in the time of their glory and prosperity. (1).

Fort.—We have already seen that the capital was surrounded by ditches and ramparts seven miles in length. In the first place there was one ditch and rampart all round the capital, which was pierced by a number of strong gates.—*Beerdwaraja*, on the southern side (near the modern Rashik Ganja), *Lal Dwaraja*, on the western side (near the Kalindi Bandh), *Haldi Dwaraja*, on the north-western side of the capital (near Krisna bandh), etc. These gates were constructed on sound military lines and there were cannon mounted on the ramparts and over the gates with men always ready to fire them if occasion arose. Guns also, could be fired on the enemy through the loop-holes of the walls of the fort.

In front of the gates there was generally a floating bridge over the ditch which could be taken away very easily. The ditches were supplied with water stored up for the purpose in the big *bandhs*. Inside this there were many other forts surrounding the palace, the storehouses, the armouries, etc. These forts also had a number of gates, *e.g.*, the stone gate and the mud gate; there were

(1) Bengal was a land of soldiers. "The Moghul sovereign exacted military service from these Zamindars (the twelve zamindars of Bengal). Thus says the Ayeen Akbery:—

The Subah of Bengal consists of 24 Sircars and 487 Mahals. The revenue is 1,49,61,482 Sicca ruppees, and the Zamindars (who were mostly Kayestha) furnish 23,330 cavalry, 801,158 infantry, 170 elephants, 4,260 cannons and 4,400 boats."

many private gates as well. The Raja lived with his family inside the fort and there were also storehouses and armouries inside it. The store-house called the Hamarbari was situated on the southern side of the palace, where provisions were kept in store for the army. Besides the fort of Bishnupur, there were many other forts in Mallabhoom. Traces of fortification can be found in many places, such as Karasurgarh, Asurgarh, Shyam-sundargarh, Indas, Dumni, Behar, Lego, Chandrakona, Garbetta, etc.

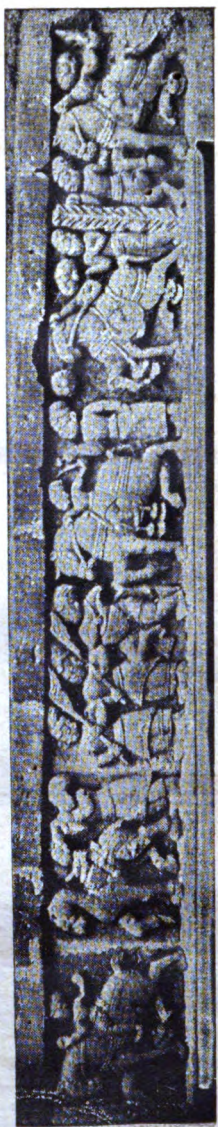
Armouries.—Armouries were situated just on the south-east corner of the innermost fort, where all kinds of arms and armour were made. Iron and steel also were prepared there from a certain kind of stone and coal. Tradition points out to us the place where the armouries were situated; and the excellent armour they produced is still admired by every one. A number of cannon generally six feet in length, are still to be seen over the rampart just in front of the strone-gate. They are still fired at the time of the Durga Puja festival as an indication to the worshippers of the whole district of the proper time to offer their sacrifices.

Dal Madal.—The most remarkable piece of iron ordnance is the cannon named *Dalmardan*, popularly called *Dal-Madal*, lying by the side of the Lalband Lake. (2).

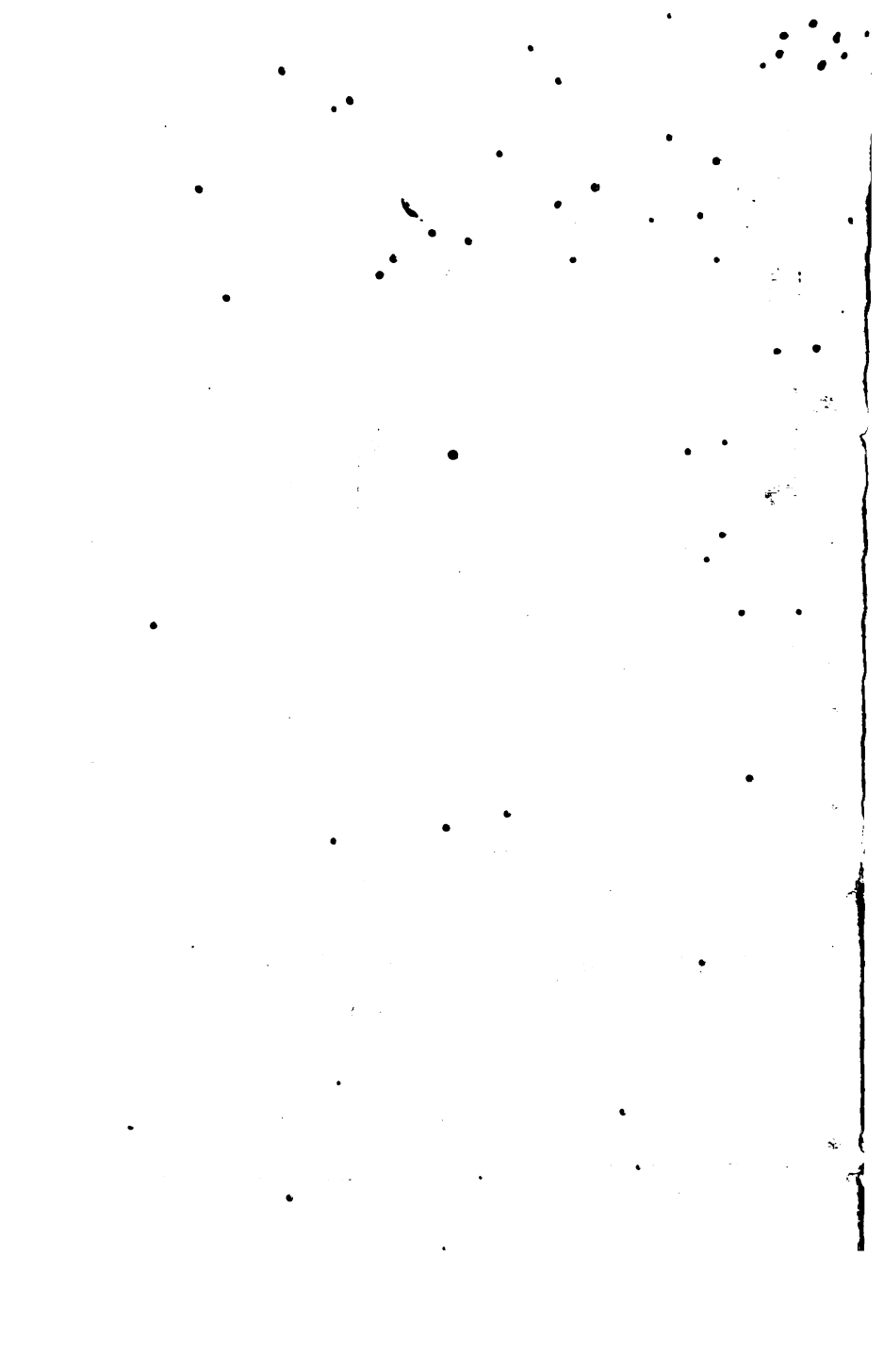
(2) It was formerly in a half-buried condition. But now it is placed on a raised platform and all possible care is now being taken to preserve it, through the kindness of his Excellency Lord



DAL MADAL



HORSEMEN LED TO THE FIELD



It is apparently made of sixty three hoops or short cylinders of wrought iron welded together, and overlying another cylinder, also of wrought iron, the whole being well welded and worked together. Though exposed to all weathers it is, still free from rust, and has a black polished surface. Its extreme length is 12 feet $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the diameter of the bore being $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the muzzle and $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches throughout the remainder of its length. It is the same cannon, which, tradition relates, was fired by the God Madan Mohan when Bhaskar Pandit attacked Bishnupur at the head of the Mahrattas. There is a Persian inscription in two lines. This has been interpreted to mean one lakh and twenty-five rupees, which may be taken to stand for the cost of the cannon.

Sword of Raghunath Sinha I.—There is a sword of Raghunath Sinha I. in the house of Babu Jogendranath Singha of Kuchiakole, a scion of the Malla family. The sword is of the usual length. The front-half is double-sided and its tip may well serve the purpose of a bayonet. Its handle is well-protected. Though 200 years old it is free from rust; and we cannot but admire the skill of the workmen of the day.

An officer was in charge of the fort and artillery. He had under him 22,000 "coras or digars" in constant employment to keep the ditches and rampart. Also, the supervision of the armouries kept him constantly en-

Ronaldshay the governor of Bengal who visited this historic town in December, 1918.

gaged. For all practical purposes he was the war minister of the Principality.

Judicial System.—Justice was administered according to Hindu law. Most of the cases were decided or compromised by the local Mukhyas, Patradharies, etc. Only the cases of severe nature, as well as appealable cases were filed in the king's court. The king heard cases personally in the presence of his ministers and subjects in an open Durbar. The punishment was generally severe, though not unjust. Chastity was looked upon as the highest of virtues and any offence against it was severely dealt with—sometimes with the tearing of an eye, and sometimes by burning the culprit alive. Society was firmly established and any breach of social rules was always considered as a serious offence. Theft and outrage were checked with such an iron hand that a traveller like Abbé Raynal tells us that theft was unknown at Bishnupur.

Religious System.—The moral and religious development of the people was placed under the care of the high priest. There were in every village and in every quarter of the town, in the whole area of Mallabhoom, a temple and an Atchala, also called 'Nat Mandir' (open hall). The idol of the temple was maintained by the rent-free lands granted by the king (supplemented by the subscription of the local people at the time of the occasional festivals). In the Atchala (open hall) there were every evening recitations from religious books by the priest of the temple, at the close of which there was a

Sankirtan (singing the holy name of God to the accompaniment of music), in which almost all the male population of the place joined. The high priest could supervise the works in these temples and selected and recommended the religious texts for recitation and explanation. He had to look after the management of all the temples of the king and to instruct the minor priests. We have already taken notice of the compulsory religious service of Gopal Singha; it was the high priest who made the compulsion effective by establishing an elaborate system of espionage. All these religious institutions made the people of Mallabhoom always honest, truthful, and God-fearing. But, above all, the noble example of the Malla kings, such as Beera Hambeera, Gopal Singha and Chaitanya Singha, were great incentives to the people of Mallabhoom to make them proceed in the path of virtue. The king was regarded by the people as their religious head, and even to the present day the people worship and offer edibles to Shree Gouranga (making *sankalpa*) in the name of the king when they do so collectively (in *sola-ana*).

Charity.—We have already taken notice of the charitable spirit of the Malla kings. The principle underlying their excessive charity is not easy to be understood. The Hindu philosophy says that God creates this universe in order to teach us various lessons, so that we may acquire the highest knowledge (*Tattwa-jnan*) for our salvation. Thus He makes us pass through the various vicissitudes of lives—not only of a man but of various other animals (*Lakshma koti*, *i.e.*, a billion in number). It

is possible for us (the Sastras enjoin) to acquire the experience of many lives in one life by our actions. This is also psychologically true. Thus the Hindu Sastras lay great stress on 'Karma' (action), the result of which the doer himself does not intend to enjoy. By this kind of action we may acquire the highest knowledge (Tattwa-juan), which alone is competent to give us salvation. Of such kind of actions, charity heads the list. It is quite easy to understand that pure and simple charity is not an easy thing for anybody and everybody. In such a charity there can be no question of personal gain either material or immaterial. The man doing charity must be fully sympathising with the object of charity—so much so that he must forget himself, as if he is metamorphosed into the object of charity. He must feel actively and actually, as it were, the pangs of sorrow of the object of charity. There will even be present physical manifestations, such as tears, palpitation of the heart, restlessness, etc., on one hand, whereas, on the other hand, his personal pleasures and sorrows will be absent for the time being. Such being the case, it is easy to see that the man doing charity to another man or an inferior creature is actually having the experience of the lessons taught by God to his object of charity. Thus God may not make him pass through such vicissitudes of life to acquire such experience. So great being the value of charity the Malla kings were excessively or rather exorbitantly charitable. Their charity—giving food and shelter to the poor, granting rent-free land to

deserving persons, building temples and granting lands for their maintenance—was ruining their material prosperity, for which in the last few reigns we saw but little anxiety. Moral and religious development for the next life was the main object even of the reigning king. The kings totally neglected politics; religion was the only thing favoured by them.

Religious Influence of Bishnupur-Raj on the history of the world.—The history of religious development in Mallabhoom is almost unparalleled in history. We have already taken notice of the compulsory religious service and the profuse grants of rent-free land to religious persons and institutions. The high tolerant spirit of the Malla-Raj has also been noticed, which has been amply testified in their grants of rent-free lands to Mahomedans (also in the establishment of a matha for the Nanak-Panthi, *i.e.*, the followers of Nanak, on the northern side of Krishnabandh Lake). All these noble deeds did not go in vain. They not only made the country a heavenly place but turned out reformers—one of whom had a large following all over Bengal and another whose religion not only finds an immense following in India but even in all important centres of the world. The one is Ramai Pandit, whose works have been discussed to a certain extent in the first chapter, and the other is Ramkrishna Paramahansa, who glorified Mallabhoom even in the other side of the globe.

Ram Krishna.—In this short treatise the works of

Ramkrishna cannot be adequately dealt with. Numerous volumes have been written on the subject. And here we shall make a very short review of the life and works of this illustrious reformer. Gadadhar (as Ramkrishna was formerly named) was born at Kamarpukur, a village just outside the border of the present Bankura District. His father Khudiram Chatterjee was at first an inhabitant of Dero, a village in the Burdwan district. But he had to leave his native village, as he could not condescend to tell a lie in favour of the local zamindar. Thus he was forced to come to Kamarpukur, where Gadadhar was born. Gadadhar from his very childhood was of a peculiar nature. He did not love to play like his comrades. His very presence had some peaceful influence on the lives and characters of all around him. He was very fond of religious conversation and of reading religious books. He was exceptionally intelligent and had a sweet voice for music. After the death of his father he went to Calcutta with his elder brother. There he was appointed the priest of Kalimata of Dakshmineshwar. Here he passed his days in meditation and religious study, and very soon became totally unfit for any worldly work. His mind was, as it were, always in the service of God and he could find and realise divine manifestations all round him. In the course of a few years his fame reached far and wide and many religious persons began to gather round him. His followers became many in number and some of them did immense good to the world. His illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda deserves special men-

tion. It was he who preached the philosophy of his religion even in America. It was through his efforts that Hinduism gained a high place among the religions of the world. Very soon a society of Ramkrishna Paramahansa was formed. The society is a friend to the poor and the needy and their kind, helping hand reaches the doors of the distressed and makes them feel the blessing of God—Whose ways are all mysterious. In almost all important centres of India the philanthropic works of the society can be seen. The society is daily prospering, doing great service to the cause of the religious development of the world, mostly through charity in the same way as the Bishnupur-Raj tried to achieve the religious development of Mallabhoom.

Agriculture and Commerce.—Agriculture and commerce were in a prosperous condition. The big bandhs, besides affording means of self defence by supplying water to the moats, also served the purpose of a good irrigation system. Even to the present day, the bandhs supply water to the cultivated lands whenever there is a drought. The peasants lived in prosperity and produced plenty of rice, molasses, cotton, etc., to be exported to other countries. Even a hundred years ago, when there was no railway, traders came to Bishnupur to buy cotton, molasses, rice, etc., and they took away their commodities down the Darakeshwar in time of flood by boats to Ghatal, then a port and a great centre of trade. Even to the present day, though cotton and molasses are not cultivated to the same extent, Bishnu-

pur preserves its good name as an agricultural centre by supplying a great quantity of rice to less favoured districts. The forests also produced many valuable things for trade. Besides growing excellent timber, they produced honey, wax, lac, etc. Also, the industrial development of the country improved its trade to a very large extent. Rice, brass and bell-metal ware, silk-stuffs, horns, lime and lac, etc. were the chief articles of export, while the imports were coal, salt, spices, etc. The trade of the country was mostly carried on by means of permanent markets and also through the medium of *hats* and fairs where traders could buy or sell their commodities.

Industry.—Mallabhoom was an isolated country, and its people had to procure most of the necessities of life from themselves to a very late period of history. Thus they had to prepare their own clothes, utensils, tools, ornaments, etc. These articles might have been very rudimentary in the very beginning; but in course of time they became developed in beauty and usefulness, in order to keep pace with the civilisation of the country.

Localisation of Industries in Mallabhoom.—The Malla kings tried their best to localise various industries within their kingdom. The localisation of industries and fine arts in Mallabhoom is a subject of considerable importance. Weavers from Burdwan and Mandaran were brought to Bishnupur—this is certain, as there are many weavers even to the present day who are known by the name of *Burdwana* and *Mandarana*. Both these classes of weavers are also known by the general name of

Madhyakulia. The Burdwana weavers do not wear maustaches, and they are also known by the name of *Aswin* weavers. Weavers were also brought to Bishnupur from Uttarkule (probably in the district of Murshidabad). These different classes of weavers have no inter-marriage between them. They even do not join in social dinners. There are other classes of weavers, probably brought to Bishnupur by the Malla kings. They are Sharak, Patra, Madhu Sankar, etc. In architecture and sculpture, also, we find Buddhistic innovations. It is not definitely known whether these arts are indigenous or not. Most probably the Malla kings brought many architects and sculptors to Bishnupur from other places. In brass industry we find many names of utensils, along with names of places—*e.g.*, Khagrai (Khagra is a part of Baharampur), Cattki (from Cattack), Kashial (from Benaras), Mathrai (from Muttra), Patnai (from Patna) utensils. It is not definitely known whether the Malla kings brought in braziers from Khagra, Cattack, Benaras, etc. or the utensils of those countries were imitated in Mallabhoom. There are still in Bishnupur some Basaks (Mirdha). It is not yet clear whether these Basaks had any connection with the Basaks of Dacca (a class well-known for their skill in various arts). We shall see in detail that musicians were brought to Bishnupur from Delhi by the Malla kings, in order to initiate the people of Mallabhoom in the art of music.

Silk-weaving.—The art of silk-weaving was very much developed in Mallabhoom. This led to the art of

cocoon rearing. The eggs of the silk-worm were gathered and put on the leaves of *asan*, *sal* and *sida* trees in the jungle. In due time, the cocoons were formed. The weavers boiled these cocoons in water; and after washing them in wood ashes and cooling them, they wound the silk from them on a *latai*. Then the silk was coloured violet, red, etc. and became suitable for weaving. Various kinds of silk were prepared and are still prepared in Mallabhoom. The ornamental designs in the borders of the clothes (especially *saries*—clothes worn by women) were and still are exceedingly fine. Even now, they are in special request and are exported to all other parts of India. But the *kutni* stuffs (12 yds. by $\frac{3}{4}$ yd., as was the usual measurement)—a silk cloth variegated with different colours and used for the purpose of making gowns by the up-country men—which were greatly manufactured at one time have almost died out. There is also *Tassar* silk and the coarse stuff *kete*. These stuffs are both cheap and durable and are greatly exported to other districts. But the silk industry has injured the cotton industry of the place and did not allow it to come to full development.

Regarding the prospects of the silk industry. Mr. N. G. Mukerjee remarks—"In Bankura the silk-weaving industry still holds its own, though cocoon-rearing has dwindled down into insignificance. The silk-worm epidemics have been the principal cause of the great contraction of the industry within a few years, both in Midnapur and in Bankura; and as both districts still

contain a large number of people who depended at one time on sericulture, but who have taken to other pursuits. the resuscitation of the silk industry in these two districts, if taken in hand within a few years, is not such a difficult matter to accomplish." (The Silk Fabrics of Bengal, 1903.)

Lac Industry.—The manufacture of lac was formerly carried on extensively. Though lac was manufactured in almost all parts of Mallabhoom, Sonamukhi was the chief centre. Mr. Holwell, Governor of Calcutta, writes of Bishnupur in his "Interesting Historical Events"—"It is from this district that the East India Companies were chiefly supplied with the articles of shell-lacca."

Brass Industry.—Brass and Bell-metal industries were and still are of considerable importance. We have already noticed a number of utensils. Even now, a considerable number of people earn their livelihood by this industry. The utensils turned out by the people of Mallabhoom are greatly exported not only to the surrounding districts, but to the distant parts of the North-western provinces. Now the demand for Bishnupuri utensils is always greater than what the people can supply.

Conch Shell Industry.—Conch shell ornaments were and still are greatly manufactured in Mallabhoom. The Conch shells are first of all cut by a peculiar kind of saw, which cuts both ways. Then the pieces are planed by rubbing them against a rectangular piece of polished

stone. Various kinds of conch-shell bangles are manufactured at Bishnupur. Some of these bangles are intended to be overlaid with gold. Conch-shell rings are also manufactured at Bishnupur. There is a quarter of the town named *Sankaribazar*, which is mainly inhabited by Sankaries—workers on Sankha (Conch-shell). Bishnupuri conch-shell bangles and rings are in good demand in the Calcutta market, wherefrom they are exported to various places.

Other Industries.—Indigo industry was once carried on on a very considerable scale. But it has now completely died out. Molasses were greatly manufactured and exported to other countries, as we have already seen; but the industry is now on the decline. Agricultural implements were manufactured by the village blacksmith, who was paid a certain quality of paddy for each plough in the time of harvest. Fine and sharp instruments were manufactured at several places, *e.g.*, Sashpur, etc. Arms and armour were prepared in the armouries of the Malla king as we have already noticed. Wood-carving was done by carpenters in the houses of those who wanted the decoration of their houses and furniture. But recently Babu Ram Sundar Chakravarti has started a decent wood-factory. Scented tobacco is also prepared at Bishnupur; Bishnupuri tobacco (specially of the Kars) is in great demand and is exported in considerable quantities to various places.

Architecture.—The architectural work of the Malla kings even now attracts foreigners to Bishnupur.

The Malla kings, prompted by religious feelings, spent a great deal of money in building magnificent temples. During the reign of the last few kings, we find that the construction and endowment of temples were a habit of theirs, as it were. They could not remain satisfied with worshipping the idols set up by their ancestors; even some of the widows thought it a religious duty to set up new idols and dedicate new temples to them. Of course, it did immense good to the Brahmans, as well as to the helpless people who could find their living in these temples. Also, strangers and saints were entertained in these religious institutions.

The temples were many in number; and J. D. Beglar takes notice of sixteen of them in the Archaeological Survey Reports, Vol. VIII. The temples may be divided into four distinct types—

1. A single square tower—as the Malleswar temple.
2. A single tower on a square building, with the carved Bengali roof—as the temples of Madan Mohan, Laljee and Radhashyama.
3. The *Pancharatna* typē, with five towers on the same building—as the temple of Shyama Rai and the laterite temple of Madan Gopal.
4. The *Jorbangla* type, with two buildings shaped like two Bengali huts joined together—as the Jorbangla and the temple of Mahapravu.

All the temples face south, and there is a *Bhoga Mandir* (kitchen) attached to each of them. Some of the temples had compound walls, and in one of them (Radha

Shyama's temple) we find the remains of a *Lahabat khana* (high place for the drummers) over the gate. Almost all the temples have an inscription (written in old Bengali characters), showing the date of the endowment and the name of the founder. The text of almost all the inscriptions are to be found in the 'Bishwakose,' to the editor of which we are greatly indebted for the inscriptions which are not to be found now. The inscriptions given by him supply us with fairly correct information, though in some of them we find some in-accuracies. Attempts have been made to give the correct text of the inscriptions as far as practicable. They are to be found in the footnotes in connection with the political history of the founders of the temples.

A list of the twelve temples, as found in the Archaeological Survey Reports (by J. H. Marshall), is given below:—

Dates in Malla-Era.	Dates in Christian Era.	Name of the temple.	By whom built.
928	1622	Malleswar ...	Vir Singha.
948	1643	Shyam Rai ...	Raghu Nath Singha, son of Vir Hambir.
961	1655	Jor Bangla ...	" " "
962	1656	Kala Chand ...	" " "
964	1658	Lalji ...	Vir Sinha, son of Raghu Nath.
971	1665	Madan Gopal ...	Siromani, queen of the last king.
971	1665	Muruli Mohan ...	Same queen (called Churamani in the inscription).
1000	1694	Madan Mohan ...	Durjan Singha.
1032	1726	Jor Mandir ...	Probably Gopal Singha.
1035	1729	Radha Gobinda ...	Krishna Singha, son of Gopal Singha.
1043	1737	Radha Madhab ...	Churamani, queen of the last king.
1064, Saka 1680	1758	Radha Syama ...	Chaitanya Singha.

The dates of the twelve temples fall between 1622 and 1758, A.D., evidently the flourishing period of the Raj. Almost all the important temples have been already

noticed. There are many other temples, some of which deserve special mention.

Rash Mancha.—Rash Mancha is still considered to be a grand specimen of architecture. It is said to have been constructed by Beera Hambeera. No inscription is to be found there. It is said that, when Beera Hambeera introduced from Brindaban the celebration of the Rash ceremony to Bishnupur, all the deities were brought to this temple, and a festival was held here for three days. The Rash Mancha consists of a large square chamber, surrounded by three long and narrow galleries. There are ten arched doors on each side, and the whole is covered by a large pyramidal roof. Inside the galleries is the sanctuary, with the altar of the god.

Mahadeb Siddheswar's Temple at Behulara (near Onda).—This is, according to Beglar, the finest brick temple in the district, and the finest, though not the largest, brick temple that he had seen in Bengal. "Besides the Lingam, there are inside a naked Jaina figure, a ten-armed female, and a Ganesh."

Sandeswar's Temple.—There is another temple named Sandeswar's temple, about four miles north of Bishnupur. It is of the single square tower type. There is no inscription to be found in the temple, but we learn from tradition, as well as from the printed pamphlet of the Late Shibdas Bhattacharjee, that it was constructed by Prithwi Malla in 641, M.E. in the fourteenth century. A large fair, named Baruni Mela, is held near this temple, on the occasion of the *Baruni Snan*.

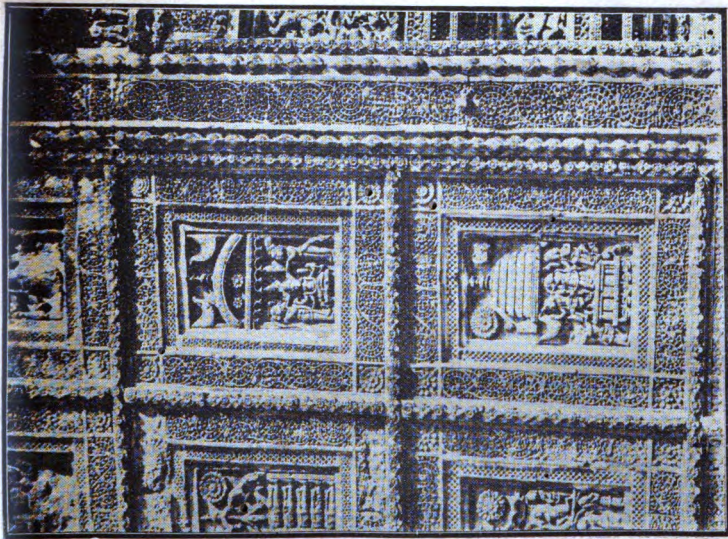
Most of the above temples are protected by the government, under the Ancient Monument Preservation Acts; and constant care is being taken by periodical repairs to prevent natural destruction.

Though almost all the temples are decorated more or less with carvings on the walls, the temples of Shyama Rai, Madan Mohan, and Jor Bangla are the finest and are most artistically decorated. The temple of Shyam Sai is considered the loveliest of all. It is beautifully decorated on all sides and even on the various arches; and its fine towers look exquisitely beautiful from a distance. Most of the temples are now without their idols. The idols have been gathered together in the temples of Kalachand and Radha Shyama, in order to cut down the expense of worship, which was in the flourishing age an exorbitant amount. Tradition says that seven maunds of oil was required to light the evening lamps in the temples.

Stone Chariot.—There is one thing which is even more surprising than all the above archaeological productions. It is the stone chariot of Madan Mohan, still extant on the northern side of the Mudgate. Tradition says that it was constructed by Raghu Nath Singha for the idol Madan Mohan; and it was drawn by horses and men during the Rathajathra festival. It is for the experts to examine whether the chariot was strong enough to remain intact through the jerking of being drawn by men and horses, and to decide whether the tradition had any foundation. (Cf. Appendix III c.)

Sculpture.—The temples are mostly decorated with moulded bricks and carved stones. The size of these carvings varies from one square inch to one square yard. From these carvings we have a glimpse at the society of Ancient Mallabhoom.

Regarding the religion, the carvings show episodes from the lives of the various incarnations of the Gods—Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, etc. In some places all the ten incarnations are placed side by side; of these, Narayana with conch, wheel, club, and lotus looks exquisitely beautiful: Durga, Siva, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, Gonesh, i.e., all the gods of the Durga Puja ceremony, are also beautifully made out of the bricks and are represented life-like on the western walls of the Shyama Rai's temple: religious processions of the Vaishnavas with their musical instruments "*khola*," "*karatal*," etc.: Krishna and Radha in various joyous moods—sometimes in pleasure boats, sometimes in the Park, sometimes playing with their companions, as well as 'Rasha Leela' and 'Dole Leela'—are represented on large circular blocks showing the Gopinees and devotees dancing round the circle. In one place, on the eastern wall of Shyama Rai's temple, we find a very excellent representation of the 'Gopinee-Elephant' (Nava-Gopi-Kunja). A number of Gopinees formed themselves in the shape of an elephant—four forming the legs, one, the trunk and so on—with Radha Krishna on the back. In numerous places we find the dancing of Gopinees in various joyous attitudes. Scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, such as the



BRICK PANELS WITH THE IMAGES OF GODS
(Madanmohan temple)



ASCETICS (Radhamadhab temple)



arrow-bed of Bhishma, the killing of Ravana, etc., chariots of gods and of Kurukshetra warriors, drawn by men and animals, are also to be found on those carvings.

Regarding the political life, the royal court and royal processions: kings and courtiers hunting deer and other animals: wrestlers combatting for the prize: war chariots drawn by horses: soldiers with peculiar arms and armour: fighting-boats sailing along the rivers: horses and elephants trained for the battle: gladiatorial contests of men and various animals—tigers, elephants, bulls, etc. are also clearly and artistically represented in those carvings.

Regarding the social life, scenes from home life, social entertainments, amusements such as the dancing of women and playing on various musical instruments, are to be found in these carvings. A gentleman smoking tobacco, with his two servants waiting on each side, is represented on the western wall of Shyam Rai's temple.

There are in these carvings animal life "in various lifelike poses"—elephants and horses gaily caparisoned bulls, tigers, monkeys, wild boars, ducks, etc. There are also various ornamental designs round the arches and on all sides of the pillars and rectangular blocks containing representations of gods, men, animals, etc.

Water-works.—The Malla-kings had even a pumping system for supplying water to the royal household. There is still a brickbuilt reservoir half-buried in the rampart, on the southern side

of the palace. Both the materials used and the workmanship of the masons employed in its construction were so excellent that even to the present day a stranger thinks the building to be of recent date. The ditch on the southern side of the reservoir is still known by the name of Fu-a-ra Khana, i.e., the fountain ditch. This ditch supplied water from Lalbandh for pumping into the reservoir. The top of the reservoir is uncovered; and there are a number of pipes, resembling the openings of small wells, at the bottom. It is said that in several places in the courtyard under-ground tubes have been found. Some say that this building was for throwing in offenders and captives who were doomed to death. But this has no foundation whatever: whereas we may state with some precision, from the name of the ditch Fu-a-ra-Khana (fountain ditch) and from the position of the large pipes in its bottom, that the building was intended to serve the purpose of a reservoir. These water-works speak very highly of the civilization of the Malla kings and of the high standard of their comforts of life.

Music.—The architecture is a past glory; but music is still a living glory of Bishnupur. It was first introduced in the fourteenth century, in the reign of Prithwi Malla, the forty-second king of the dynasty. Since then it has been preserved and cultivated at Bishnupur down to the present day. We know and must confess that oriental arts and sciences were not free of access to an earnest student. And the Malla kings had great diffi-



WOMEN PLAYING ON GUITARS (Madan Mohan temple)



culty in introducing musical knowledge in Mallabhoom. From the fourteenth century onwards, the Malla kings were constantly trying to develop the musical attainments of their subjects by procuring even the aid of the Mahomedan musicians of Delhi. Of these Mahomedan musicians, Bahadur Khan and Peer Box were the most important. It is said that Raghu Nath Singha II. brought Bahadur Khan from Delhi to Bishnupur on a monthly salary of five hundred rupees (which in those days was a considerable amount), in the beginning of the eighteenth century. His immediate disciple was Gadadhar Chakravarty, who made music his family occupation. Many first class musicians sprang up in his family and glorified the name of Bishnupur. Of them. Shyamchand, Kanai and Madhab deserve special mention. Kanai and Madhab were so devoted to their art that they were called mad by their ignorant neighbours. They travelled far and wide for the culture of their beloved art, music. They could produce purest melodies (Ragas) which were highly appreciated. One of the descendants of Gadadhar Chakravarty is Nilmadhab Chakravarty, who is still living. He was the musician of Jyotindra Mohan Tagore and now gets a full pension.

After Bahadur Khan, Gadadhar Chakravarty became the court musician of the Malla kings. He had many disciples, of whom the chief was Krishna Mohan Goswami. Ram Sankar Bhattacharjee (a disciple of the latter) succeeded as the court musician. He had a free music school at his house, and

many students from other parts of Bengal learnt music there and were supplied with free board and lodging. His disciples were many and some of them were renowned personages in the history of music in Bengal. Of them Kshetramohan Goswami, the inventor of notation in Indian music, and Dinabandhu Goswami were very important. Kshetramohan was the court musician of the Tagore family of Calcutta and was the author of 'Kantha Koumadi' and 'Sangitsar' containing the purest form of melody.

Then arose another renowned musician in Bishnupur, named Jadu Bhatta (son of Madhusudan Bhatta, a Vaidic Brahman), in the time of Ram Sankar, or rather, a few years later. It is said that Jadu Bhatta was of an irritable temper and could not remain in one place for a long period of time. He left Bishnupur at an early age, and lived in Calcutta for several years and developed his musical faculties in the various branches. He was the court musician of several kings. He was with the Burdwan and Tripura Rajas and for some years with the Bishnupur Raja also. He was well-known for his high attainments in all the branches of music. He was not only an expert in vocal music, but an excellent player on wire instruments and Mridanga as well.

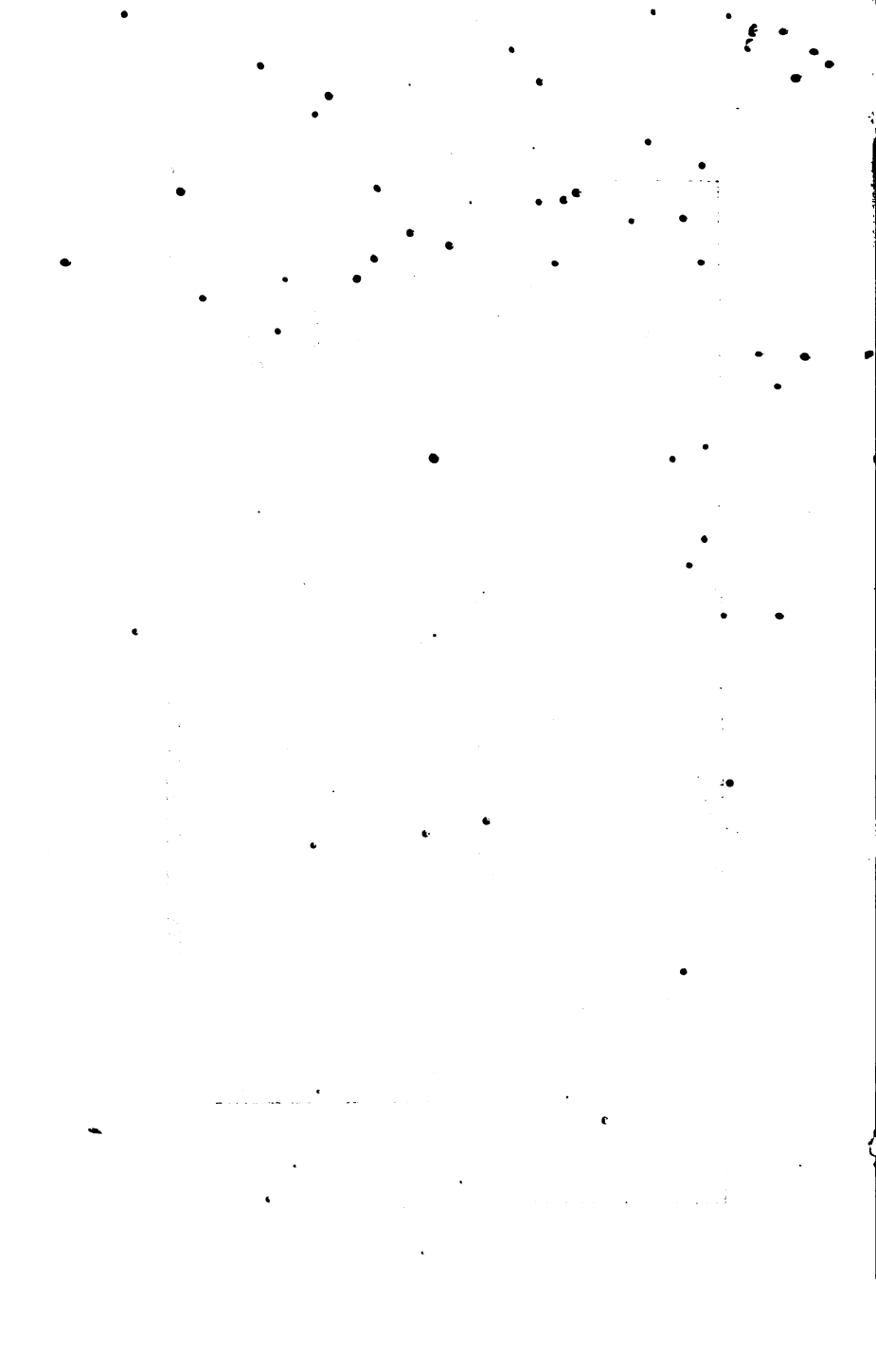
Ram Sankar Bhattacharjee had another worthy disciple, named Ananta Lal Banerjee. He thoroughly mastered the science of music and had a number of disciples, some of whom still command the field of music



DUCK POSES (Madanmohan temple)



ARABESQUE SCULPTURE (Madanmohan temple)



in Bengal. He was the grandson of Gadadhar Chakravarty in the female line, and the father of three Banerjees and a teacher of Prof. Radhika Prasad Goswami, the court musician of the Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandi. He was not only a good musician but a good Mridangee as well. He has a Mridangee disciple named Iswar Chandra Sirkar, the Mridangee of the Nara Jole Raj, well-known for his old and new fashion of playing the Mridanga and Tabla. He has another noteworthy disciple named Haradhan Deogharia, the teacher of the local music school. Ananta Lal was the court musician of Raja Ramkrishna Singha and it was he who kept the torch of musical science burning in Bishnupur in the declining days of the Mallas.

We have already taken notice of Peer Box, the Mahomedan Mridangee brought over to Bishnupur. He taught music to Ram Mohan Chakravarty, of the family of Gadadhar Chakravarty. This Ram Mohan had two disciples, Jagat Chandra Goswami (the father of Prof. Radhika Prasad Goswami) and Jagannath Mukhopadhaya. Then follows Girish Chandra Chatterjee of Gopalpur who was a Mridangee in the court of the Tripura Raj and is at present a teacher in the Bishnupur Music School. His grand father was also a renowned Mridangee, who initiated him in the art of music in his early years.

The sons and disciples of Ananta Lal Banerjee are specially noteworthy. His disciple Prof. Radhika Prasad

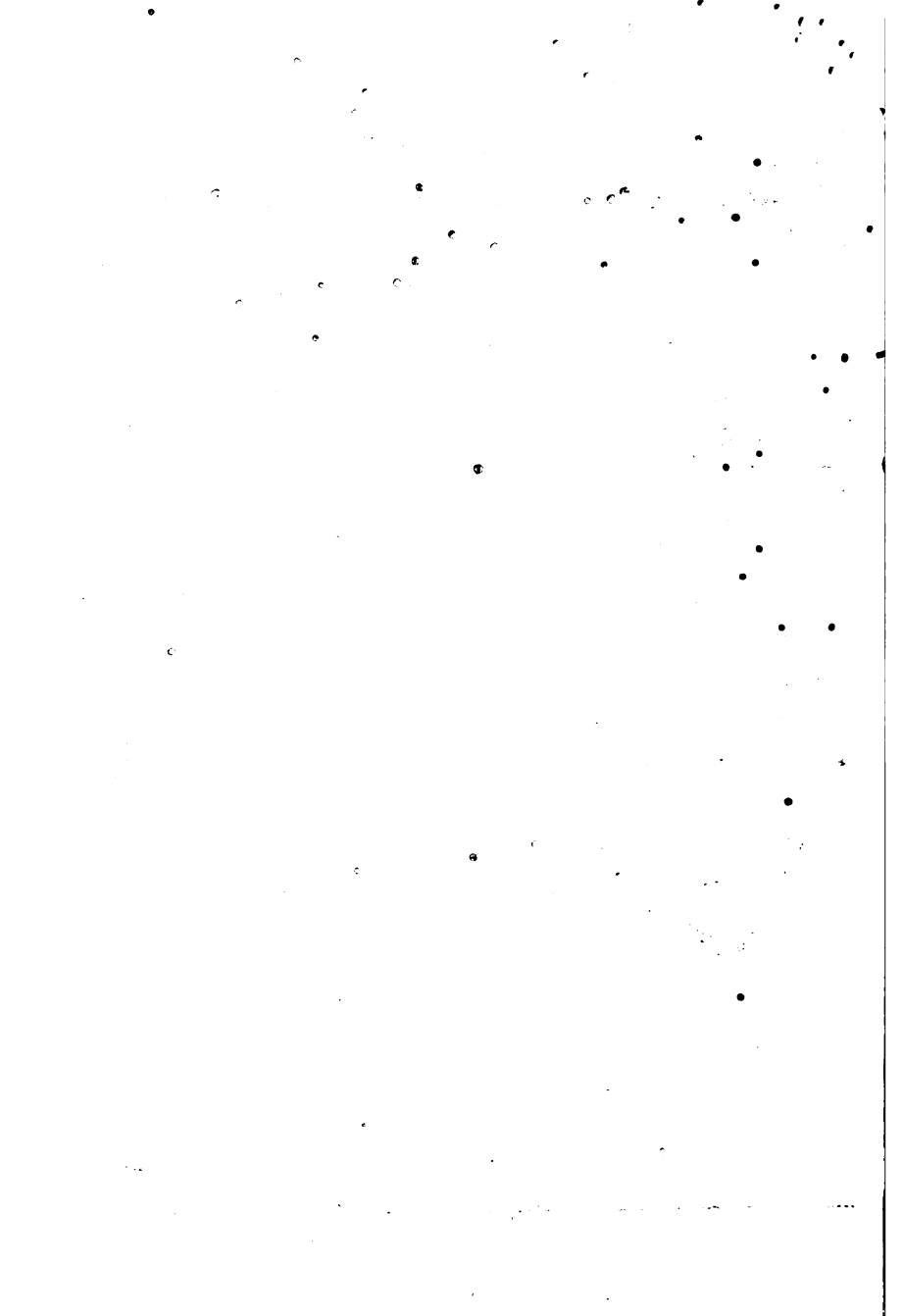
Goswami is one of the best musicians of India. He is the principal of the Baharampur College of Music, established by the Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandi. As a 'Khayali' his name is known to all India. Of the three sons of Ananta Lal, the eldest, Ram Prasanna Banerjee, the author of 'Mridanga Darpan', resides in the court of the Raja of Narajole (Midnapur). The second, Gopeswar Banerjee, the author of 'Sangitar-naba' and 'Sangitchandrika,' is the court musician of the Burdwan Raj. The third, Surendra Nath Banerjee, is the musician of the Calcutta Brahma Samaj. He is a young man, but his inborn genius has already established his fame.

Thus we have found that the History of the Music of Mallabhoom is not so brief as the History of its Raj-family. Bishnupuri Music still holds the field in the musical associations of Bengal. It developed and is still developing the Art of Music in Bengal. It is a real glory to the Bishnupur-Raj and for it the whole of Bengal is indebted to Bishnupur. Bishnupur was known and is still known by the name of 'Chota Delhi' (i.e., Delhi in miniature, as far as music is concerned).

Literary Productions.—Regarding the literary productions of Bishnupur, its history is not so rich as in architectural and musical productions. However, we find that Beera Hambeera was a great patron of learning, and he composed many poems some of which are lost. The thoughtful nature of his writings and the



PEACOCK AND CREEPER ARCH (Radha Shyam temple)



depth of his imagination can be inferred from his two songs already quoted. There was a big library at Bishnupur court, and many research scholars have been supplied with valuable books from here. The work of Ramai Pandit has been discussed in detail. Manohar Das, the author of 'Dinamoni Chandrodaya,' was an inhabitant of Mallabhoom. Shuvankara (there is a dara, i.e., a canal in Mallabhoom named Shuvankara's Dara), the arithmetician whose mathematical devices are still memorised by pathsala boys, was an administrator in the court of the Malla kings. There also flourished a great Sanskrit dramatist named Murari Misra, the author of the famous drama Anargha Raghava. This book has been highly spoken of by many critics. It is said that the drama Anargha Raghava was first staged at the Bishnupur court. Sahitya Darpana quotes profusely from Anargha Raghava Natakam. Kasiram Bachaspati, a descendant of Murari Misra, wrote Smriti Tattva Tika, which is an authoritative exposition of Hindu law. Jugal Ram, an inhabitant of Mallabhoom, wrote a Ramayana in Bengali. The book is very valuable for its excellent imagination; and it may be considered as a landmark in the progressive history of Bengali literature. There is also a Bengali poem named 'Durga Panch Ratri,' composed by one Ram Prasad of Mallabhoom. The book contains a poetical narration of actions and exploits described in the 'Chandi.' The songs of Ram Sankar Bhattacharyaya, the musician, were also of great importance, two of which are given in the foot

note (3). There also flourished in Mallabhoom a Vaisnava poet named Prasād Das.

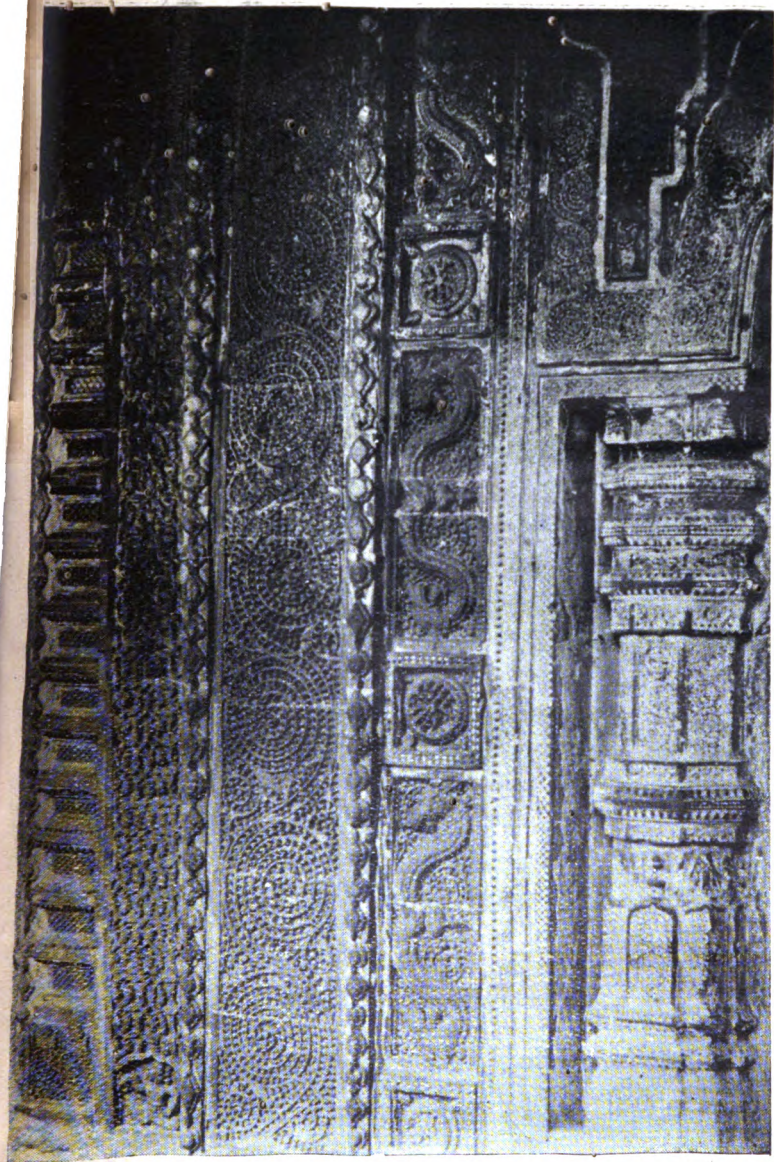
Education.—Malla kings were great patrons of learning. We have already seen that religious education had a considerable scope in the temples. The scholars were greatly honoured and rewarded by the Malla kings. There were a number of Pandits in the court, who were to explain to the king the law of the Hindus, and to explain difficulties in the various shastras. The Malla kings granted lands to learned Brahmans for opening schools (*tols*) in their houses. In these *tols* the sons of Brahmans were taught Sanskrit literature, as well as

(3) I. বাহার, চৌতাল ।

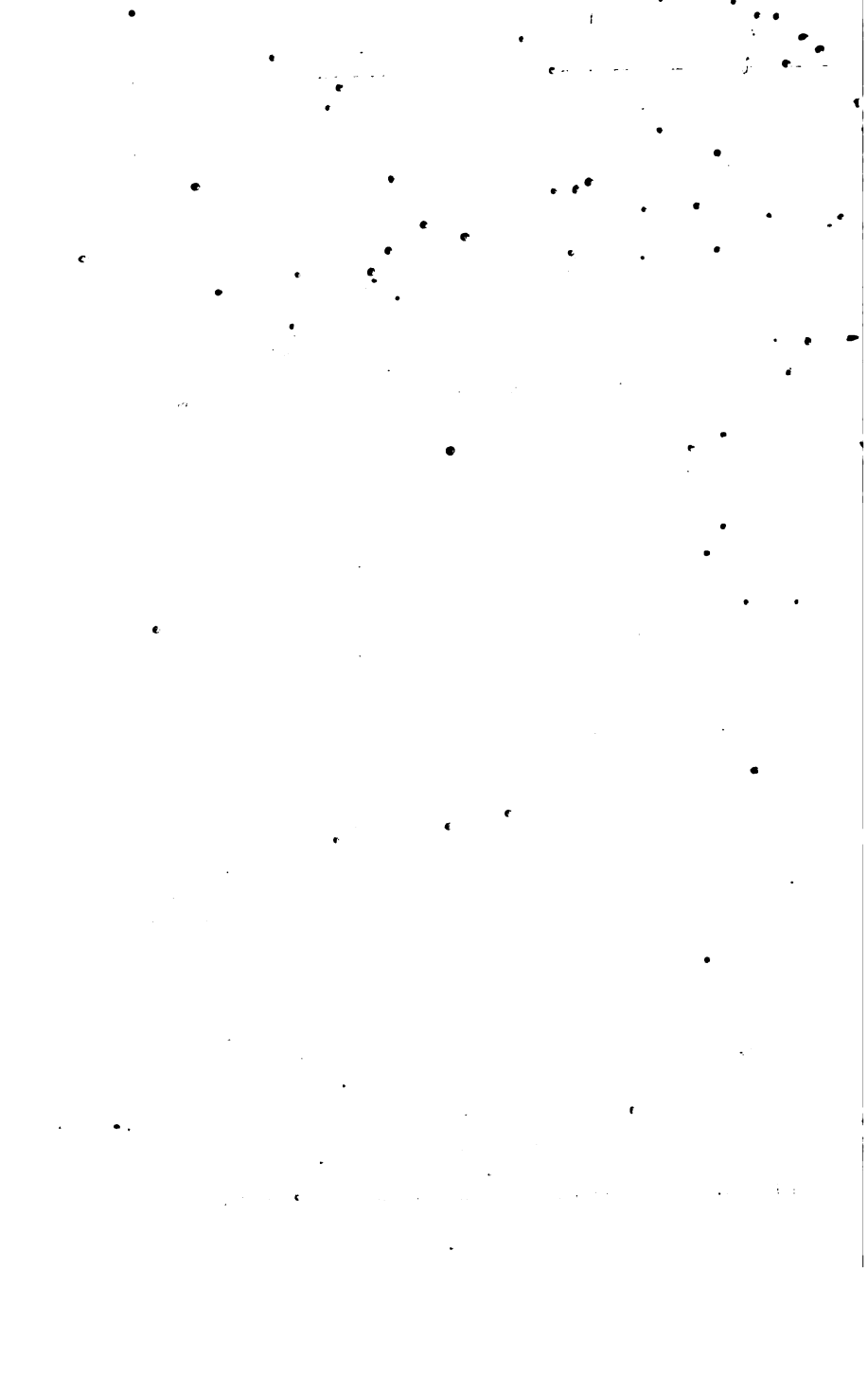
ফুলিষণ ঘন, মোলে আরে,
বসন্তরি অব বহত পবন, মন্দ মন্দ সসীরণ ।
মন ভাঁওয়ে বত মধুপবন, নিরত কর শুভ্রারে,
নই নই কলিয়া পর ধায়ে চুরক হরত ॥
কেতকী গোলাপ আঁওর চম্পক বকুল বেলা,
অতি কোমল দল কুহুম সঁহিত প্রফুল্লিত ভাঁই,
নাথ নাথ নিরত করত শুভ্রারে নিরথ নাথ ॥

II. সিদ্ধ, ঝাঁপতাল ।

সুরলি ধনি শুনি, এরি মঁয়ে
বমুনা তীর তবসো হাঁসে,
তমু মন বোবন সব বিকায়ে ।
পবন গতি হীন ভঁয়ে, বমুনা উজান গঁয়ে ;
বিসর গেরি গঁেওন শুকশারি, হানারি প্যারি ।
ধকিত তেঁরি, মীন, গঁেও, তুণ নাবে খাওয়ে পুন ;
বাছুরা না গিয়ে স্তন, অসি শুনারি ।
ছায়ে লাগারে ডরি, আ-লাগারে ব্রজনারী ।
জল ভরণে ভুল গেরি ঠাড়ি সঁথিয়ে ॥



PILLAR SCULPTURE (Madanmohan temple) To face page 116



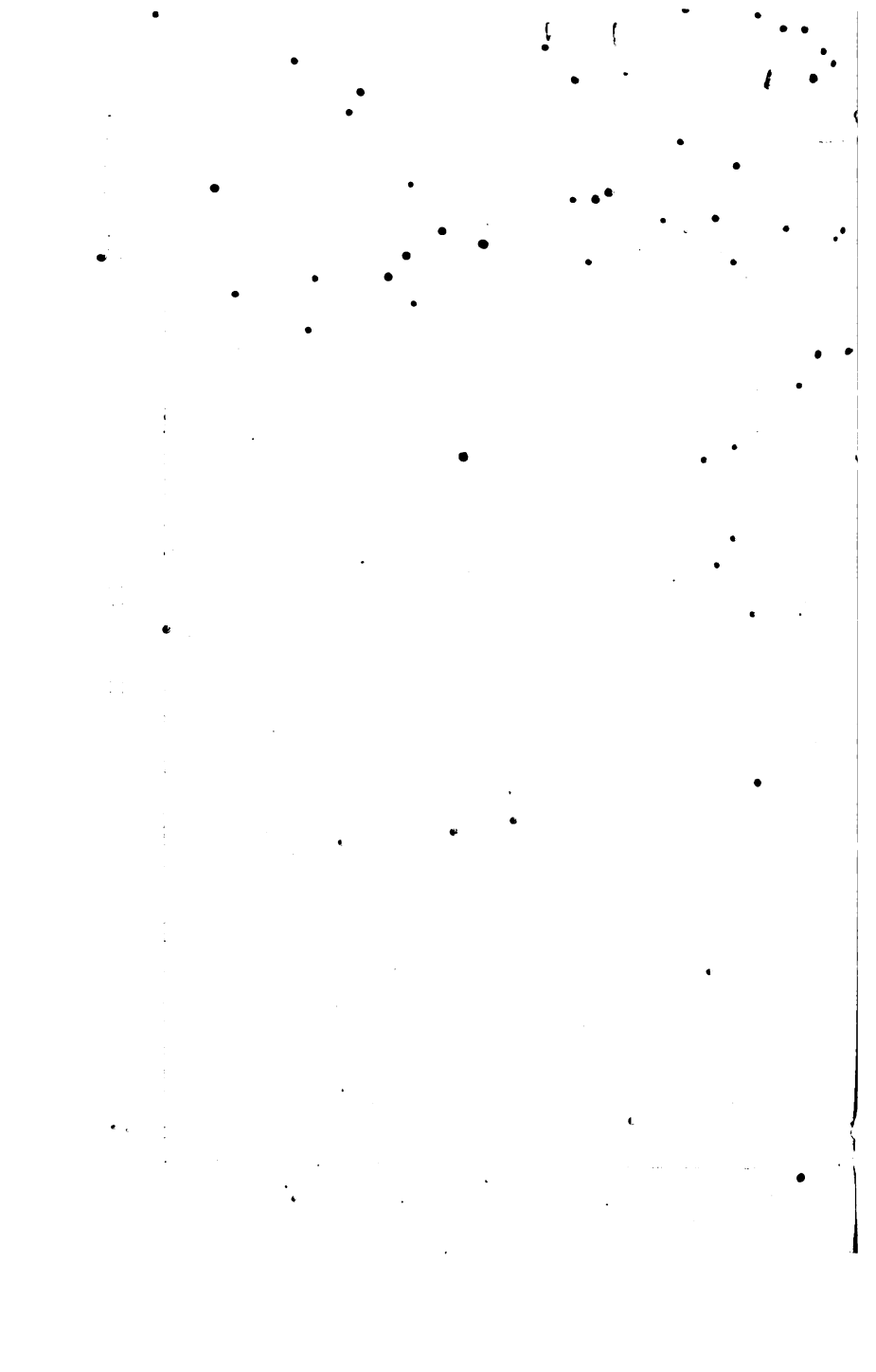
philosophy, religion and law through the medium of Sanskrit. Printing being unknown, the students had to copy each day's lesson from the book (*Punthi*) of the teacher (*Adhyapaka*). The *vivo voce* method of teaching was generally adopted, and memory was greatly cultivated. Almost all the Brahman boys were educated in these *tols*. The boys of the other classes were taught their lessons in the village schools, which were generally held in the *Nat Mandir* (open hall) in front of the village temple. The teacher might or might not be a Brahman; and he was fed by the villagers in turn in their own houses. The teacher collected fees from the students at a very low rate. The monitorial system was greatly employed both in the *tols* and the village *pathsalas*. The teachers were in sole charge of the students; and there grew up a fatherly feeling on the part of the teacher towards the students, who also treated their teacher with proper respect and had a filial affection for him.

Royal Court.—In the royal court there were, besides the ministers, the court pandit, musician, astrologer, priest, clown, etc. We have already taken notice of the musicians, pandit and priest. The astrologer was to inform the king of the auspicious moments for various acts as well as to foretell future events. The astrologer was also to do the work of the astronomer. Even to the present day, we find that the astrologer (who enjoys rent-free land for his services) comes to the temple of Mrinmayee and ascertains the right moment of worship by means of his *tami* (a cup). He puts an empty

cup, having a small hole at the bottom, on the surface of water. The water enters the cup and makes it sink after a certain period. Then he at once takes up the cup from the bottom of the water and puts it again on its surface, and goes on working in this way for day and night during the three puja days. He first puts the cup on the surface of the water, by knowing the time from sunrise. Even in this present time of scientific development, we find that the astrologers of Mallabhoom do not fail to give the correct time that can be expected from an excellent watch. The court clown was of no less importance. His function was to keep the king in a pleasant mood during the serious works of the day. The clown was generally very intelligent. His method of treating things was indeed very jovial and his speech and sarcasm kept the whole court always in laughter. But at the same time the clown had a deep insight into matters and touched at the very root of things and hit at vital points by means of his sarcasm. The royal court was always gay; but in the last few reigns we have found that the Royal court had more of a religious than of a political character. The court was decorated in the ancient Hindu style. There was a *Singhasan* (throne) for the king: whereas the ministers and courtiers were assigned proper places in suitable seats. The floor of the hall was spread over with carpets, and there were many pictures and ornamental lamps against the walls. The kings were not overstrict in their manners and even an ordinary subject pre-



HUNTING



sent at the court could give his opinion when a discussion (even of a serious nature) was going on.

Festivities.—The Malla Kings had various festivities during the year. Besides the many Hindu festivals, *e.g.*, *Rash*, *Dol*, *Durgotsab*, etc., the Malla kings had several special festivities of their own. They are Indra Puja festival, Sword festival, Akhan festival, Pushya Avisheka festival, Bijaya Avisheka festival, etc.

Indra. Puja.—On the twelfth Lunar day of the Bengali month of Bhadra, the Malla kings held the Indra Puja. This Indra puja is still performed in a very pompous way. All the santals in the locality of Mallabhoom gather together on this festive day with their musical instruments, *Lagrd* and bamboo *Bansi* and wire instruments. The king, after worshipping the flag of Indra in his palace, goes out in a Royal procession to Indkuri in the north-eastern side of the town, with the priest and the courtiers. There Indra puja is performed in a magnificent way. The king, after going round the place of worship several times in his procession, enters the place of worship; and, being helped by the priest, performs the worship in the prescribed way. Then the flag is raised with the help of the Santals. The place resounds with the music of the Santals; and the dancing of the Santal women makes the scene extremely joyous and pleasant to the bystanders. The place is visited by many persons and there gathers a crowd of various people to see the performance.

Sword Festival.—Then the sword and other arms and

armour of the Royal household were worshipped for fifteen days in the temple of Mrinmoyee. But this ceremony has long been discontinued.

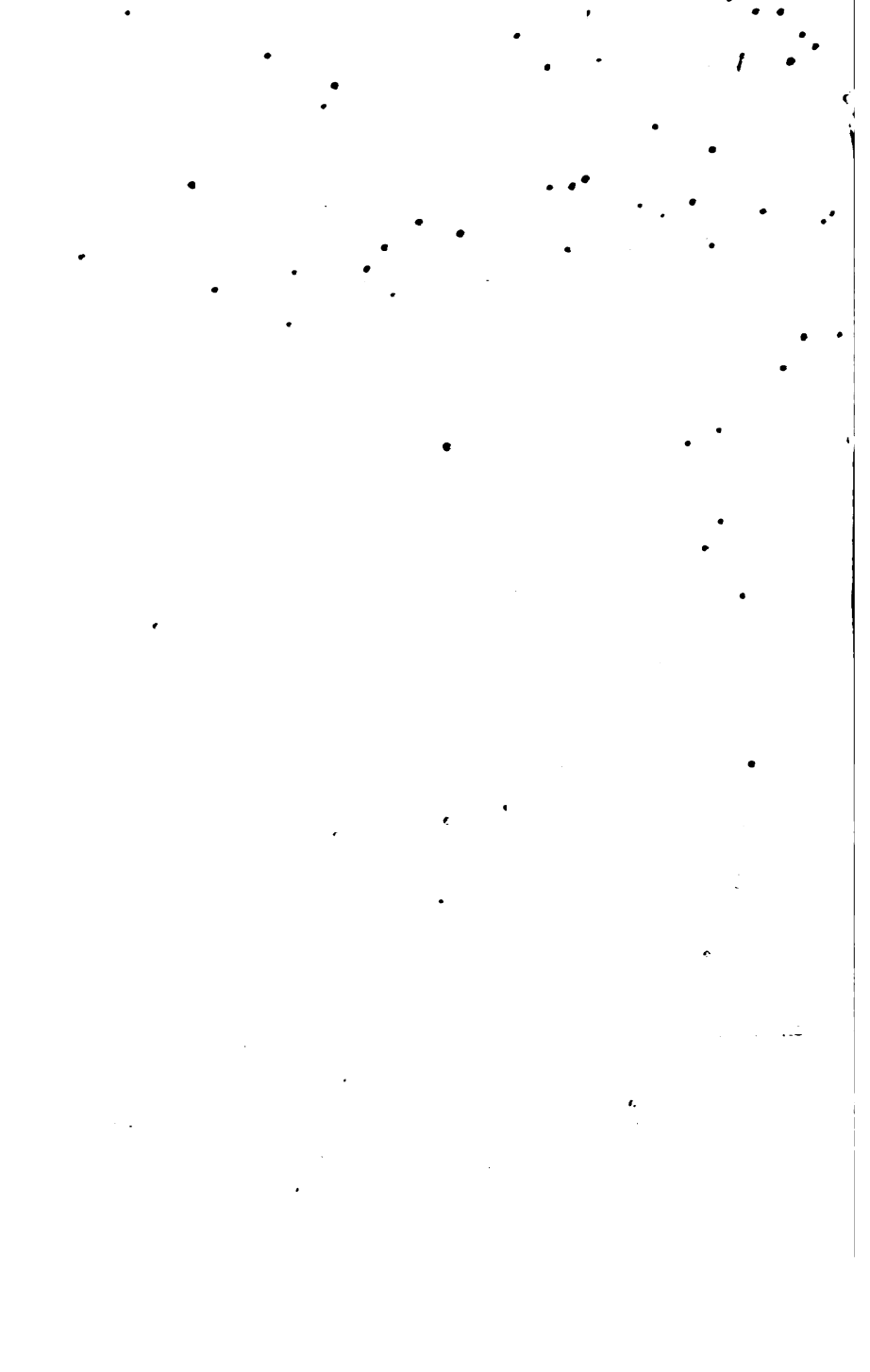
Akhan Festival.—The hunting ceremony called Akhan Shikar, on the first day of the Bengali month of Magha, is specially noteworthy. The Malla king with his courtiers and Samanta Rajas went out a hunting on that day. The Santals accompanied him and cleared the jungle of all the ferocious animals, tigers, bears, etc. On this festive day the locality of Mallabhoom resounded with the music of the *Santali Lagrda* and the drums of the Royal drummers. The jungles were surrounded on three sides by the Santals and other low-class people; whereas on the fourth side the king and his courtiers would wait with their arrows and guns ready to shoot the animals driven out of the jungle. On this side some parts were temporarily fenced, leaving outlets (locally called *Ghai*) in several places for the animals to come out in numbers through them. Near these outlets the hunters lay in ambush to shoot at their prey. In this way the hunting went on all day long and in the evening the king returned to the palace through the main road of the capital (with the killed animals on the shoulders of his men) in a gorgeous procession to the accompaniment of music.

Avisheka Festival.—There was another noteworthy ceremony—the *Pushya Avisheka*. On the full-moon day in the month of Pous, the family god of the Raj,



A HORSEMAN (Cavalry)

To face page 120



Ananta.Dev (Vishnu), was bathed in water with all the ceremonies enjoined in the Sastras. Then the Raja had his ablution in water specially prepared for the purpose. Then he was seated on the throne with the usual ceremony. The Samanta Rajas had to attend the Royal court at that time. They offered their presents and swore allegiance to him.

Manners and Customs.—The manners and customs of the Malla kings were in general the same as with all the other Kshatriya kings of India. The interior part of the palace was called 'Andar' where the queen and other female members of the Royal household lived in seclusion. This part of the palace could not be visited by anybody (not belonging to the Royal household) excepting the medical attendants. The kings generally came out of the Andar early in the morning and performed all the business of the kingdom. Everyone (excepting a Brahman) entering the throne-room of the king or seeing the king anywhere else had to salute the king, whereas the Brahmans had to bless the king first; the king then saluted the Brahman.

It was customary with the Malla kings to go through all the ceremonies prescribed in the Hindu Sastras from the time of conception to the birth of the princes. All these ceremonies need not be particularised. The marriage ceremony deserves a special mention. After the settlement of the terms of the marriage the bridegroom party went to the bride's house in a gorgeous procession on the appointed day. Then the bridegroom entered the

house of the bride's father, throwing with a stick birds made of wood at the gateway. Then the marriage ceremony was performed as usual in the case of the Kshatriyas, according to the Sama or Yajurveda.

There was one peculiarity in the feasts of the Malla kings. Instead of supplying the guests with rich utensils for the dinner, the Malla kings used *khalas* (thongas) made of sal leaves. These *khalas* were of special make and looked very beautiful. They were prepared in such a way that even the liquid portion of the food did not leak out through the bottom. The Malla kings gave a number of feasts through the year and entertained their guests with the richest dishes.

The manner of living of the Malla kings was very simple. The kings generally breakfasted after the *Pujas* of all the idols had been performed; and sometimes they partook of the *prasad* of the idols with the priests.

There was generally a custom of worshipping God, twice every day, not only by the Malla kings but also by all the inhabitants of Mallabhoom—once after bathing in the morning and once in the evening.

Dress.—The dress of a country may be divided generally into (i) Social; (ii) Military; and (iii) Ordinary dress. The social dress in some cases includes the official dress. The social dress of the people of Mallabhoom consisted of a *Dhuti*, *Jama*, and *Shawl*, a pair of half slippers in winter; whereas in all other seasons it consisted of a *Dhuti* and a *Chadar*. The Malla kings used to

wear *Jama* (a tight coat) and *Jora* (a loose gown for the lower part of the body); but from the time of the Mahomedans *chogas* and *chapkans* (worked with gold lace) were greatly used in preference to the old dress. The military dress of Mallabhoom was a peculiar armour made of iron-wire, inlaid with cotton, cloth, feather, scales of fishes, etc.; the head-dress was made of iron and was very heavy. The ordinary dress of the people was a simple *Dhuti*. The lower class people wore a scarf (*Gamcha*) over and above their small *Dhuti* when they had to attend a social function. The dress of the females of higher classes were mostly like that of an up-country woman (consisting of an under-dress, a *sari* and an *uruni*): whereas the females of the lower classes wore a coarse *sari*, wrapping it round their breast and veiling the face with a border of it.

Amusement: Lakes and Pleasure Gardens.—There is another standpoint from which the civilisation of the Malla kings can be judged. We have already inferred from the carvings in the temples that Malla kings had pleasure-boats, hunting-expeditions, gladiatorial contests in amphitheatres, royal processions, religious processions, etc. They had big *bandhs*, which served the triple purpose of defence, irrigation and amusement. The *bandhs* are seven in number; it is very difficult to ascertain by whom these *bandhs* were excavated. In several places we made mention of these *bandhs*. Three of them—*Lalbandh*, *Shyambandh*, *Krishnabandh*—lie to the east of the town and three, *Jamunabandh*, *Kalindi*

bandh and Gantanbandh to the west. These bandhs were generally made by stopping the flow of water down a natural slope by a big embankment. Vast sheets of water are thus preserved. Some of them measure about the eighth part of a square mile. There is another *bandh* named Pokabandh in the middle of the town. This is used by almost half the population of Bishnupur town. All these lakes supply the people of Bishnupur with healthy drinking water and also serve the purpose of excellent swimming-baths. The Rajas of Bishnupur had pleasure gardens on the banks of these spacious lakes, and tradition tells us that Beera Hambeera brought flower (according to some the *sherana* flower is one of them) and fruit trees from Brindaban to Bishnupur.

Amusement: New Games.—The Rajas of Bishnupur also invented games for their own amusement. A short description of one of them, named 'Dasabatar' is given below:—The Dasabatar cards are a hundred and twenty in number, which are divided into ten classes—each class bearing the mark or sign of a certain incarnation. The incarnations are ten in numbers—(1) Fish; (2) the Tortoise; (3) the Boar; (4) the Human-headed Lion; (5) Buddha; (6) Bamana (dwarf); (7) Parasuram; (8) Rama; (9) Balaram; (10) Kalki. The cards of each class (12 in number) are named as in ordinary card playing. Of the twelve cards, each of the first ten is successively marked with one, two, three and so on up to ten signs of the particular incarnation. The

eleventh is the picture of the minister (Uzir) and the twelfth the king (the incarnation). The king is the highest of the particular class, the minister the next: then of the first five classes (from the first to the fifth) number ten is the next, and of the last five number one is the next; then comes number nine, then number eight, and so on. Rama (Raghunath) is the greatest of all incarnations.

The game is generally played by five players. The play is begun by the player who gets the greatest point in the first card which is served to him in the deal. He takes the whole bundle of cards, and, having got it divided into two halves by his neighbour sitting on the right, distributes all the cards downwards (serving to the players) four at a time beginning from the lower half of the bundle. Thus every player gets twenty-four cards. The player getting the card Raghunath, the eighth incarnation, commands the game. He at once gets two cards from each player. Then he plays any of the other incarnations he holds, and gets each time one card from each player. Then, when all his incarnations are exhausted, he commands others to play a certain incarnation. The player holding that incarnation plays, and gets one card from each player. The second player plays any other incarnation he holds or if all the incarnations are exhausted in the hands of all the players, he plays a minister. If there are other incarnations or ministers in the hands of other players, while he has none, he commands the other players to play a certain incarnation, or minister.

In this way, the play goes on commencing from the highest to the lowest card. In the end, all the players count their cards won during the game. Each player has to win at least twenty-four cards, otherwise he will be loser, for he will have to buy cards from the other players winning more than twenty-four. In the beginning of the game a certain fixed price is assigned to each card which may be one pice, two pice, or more. The game is generally played for the sake of amusement and not for gambling. The amount won is generally spent in refreshment. Similar round cards are played also in Delhi, Joypur and Orissa. The cards used in Orissa have their signs different from those of Bishnupur. This play is also known by the name of *Ganjaka*.

Mahamahopaddhyay H. P. Sastri is of opinion that a game named Dasabatar (ten incarnations) was invented at the time of the establishment of the Malla Raj, i.e. twelve hundred years ago. In this game Buddha is made the fifth incarnation, instead of the ninth according to the present arrangement, and is represented by a lotus, which was the ensign of Buddha according to the Mahayana Schools of Buddhism. *Mahamahopadhyay H. P. Sastri* remarks that it had been invented before the incarnations were assigned their proper places, ninth being the place of Buddha in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, according to the poets Kshemendra and Joydeva respectively. The game from the lotus ensign of Buddha was certainly invented when the Mahayana School of Buddhism was prevalent in the period between the eighth

and the twelfth century A.D. Hence Sastri says that the game was probably invented by the Malla kings about twelve hundred years ago. We do not know, materials wanting, whether the invention of such a civilised form of game was compatible with the civilisation of the Mallas at so early an age; but as there are still a number of families who earn their livelihood by preparing these roundcards from paper, cloth and lacca for the Dasabatar game; and as tradition gives it a very ancient place in the History of Bishnupur, we are quite sure that this game was invented or brought to Bishnupur in the flourishing Malla age at the latest, if not earlier. But at any rate, this speaks very highly of the civilisation of the Malla kings.

APPENDIX 1.

LIST OF KINGS.

(With their year of coronation in Malla and Christian Eras, as found in the records of the Raj-family.)

			M. E.	A. D.
1.	Adi Malla	...	1	694
2.	Joy Malla	...	16	709
3.	Benu Malla	...	26	720
4.	Kinu Malla	...	39	733
5.	Indra Malla	...	48	742
6.	Kanu Malla	...	63	757
7.	Dhaw Malla	...	70	764
8.	Sura Malla	...	81	775
9.	Kanaka Malla	...	101	795
10.	Kandarpa Malla	...	113	807
11.	Sanatan Malla	...	134	828
12.	Kharga Malla	...	147	841
13.	Durjan Malla	...	174	868
14.	Jadava Malla	...	212	906
15.	Jagannath Malla	...	225	919
16.	Birat Malla	...	237	931
17.	Madhava Malla	...	252	946
18.	Durgadas Malla	...	283	977
19.	Jagat Malla	...	300	994
20.	Ananta Malla	...	313	1007
21.	Rupa Malla	...	321	1015
22.	Sundara Malla	...	335	1029

		M. E.	A. D.
23.	Kumud Malla	359	1053
24.	Krishna Malla	380	1074
25.	Rup Malla II.	390	1084
26.	Prakash Malla	403	1097
27.	Pratap Malla	408	1102
28.	Sindhura Malla	419	1113
29.	Sukhamoy Malla	435	1129
30.	Banamali Malla	448	1142
31.	Jadu Malla	462	1156
32.	Jiban Malla	473	1167
33.	Ram Malla	491	1185
34.	Gobinda Malla	515	1209
35.	Bhim Malla	546	1240
36.	Kattar Malla	569	1263
37.	Prithwi Malla	601	1295
38.	Tapa Malla	625	1319
39.	Dinabandhu Malla	640	1334
40.	Kanu Malla	651	1345
41.	Sura Malla II.	664	1358
42.	Shiva Sing Malla	676	1370
43.	Madan Malla	713	1407
44.	Durjan Malla II	726	1420
45.	Udaya Malla	743	1437
46.	Chandra Malla	766	1460
47.	Bira Malla	807	1501
48.	Dhari Malla	845	1539
49.	Beera Hambeera	893	1587
50.	Dhari Hambeera	926	1620

	M.E.	A.D.
51. Raghunath Singha ...	932	1626
52. Beera Singha ...	962	1656
53. Durjan Singha ...	988	1682
54. Raghunath Singha II.	1008	1702
55. Gopal Singha ...	1018	1712
56. Chaitanya Singha ...	1054	1748
	to 1108	to 1802

APPENDIX II.

ACCOUNTS OF ABBE RAYNAL AND HOLWELL.

Babu Shishir Kumar Ghosh (Editor, Amrita Bazar), writes:—Of the twelve Zamindars who ruled Bengal, one had his capital city in Bishnupur, now in the district of Bancoora. In going there, one can see even now traces of extensive fortifications and a huge cannon perhaps the biggest in the world. This country was visited by a French traveller (Abbe Raynal) and this is what he says of what he saw—

This fortunate spot, which extends about a hundred and sixty miles, is called Bissenpore. It has been governed time immemorial by a Brahmin family of the tribes of Rajahputs. Here the purity and equity of the ancient political system of the Indians is found unadulterated. This singular Government, the finest and striking monument in the world, has, till now, been beheld with too much indifference. We have no remains of ancient nations but brass and marble, which speak only to imagination and conjecture; those uncertain interpreters of manners and customs that no longer exist. Were a Philosopher transported to Bissenpore he would immediately be a witness of the life led by the first inhabitants of India many thousand years ago; he would converse with them; he would trace the progress of this

nation, celebrated as it were, from its very infancy; he would see the rise of a government, which, being founded in happy prejudices, in a simplicity and purity of manners, in the mild temper of the people, and the integrity of the chieftains, has survived those innumerable systems of legislation, which have made only a transitory appearance upon the stage of the world with the generations they were destined to torment. More solid and durable than those political structures, which raised by imposture and enthusiasm, are the scourges of human kind, and are doomed to perish with the foolish opinions that gave them birth, the Government of Bissenpore, the offspring of a just attention to order and the laws of nature, has been established and maintained upon unchangeable principles, and has undergone no more alteration than those principles themselves. The singular situation of this country has preserved to the inhabitants their primitive happiness and the gentleness of their character, by securing them from the danger of being conquered, or imbruing their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures. Nature has surrounded them with water; and they need only open the sluices of their rivers to overflow the whole country. The armies sent to subdue them have so frequently been drowned, that the plan of enslaving them has been laid aside; that the projectors of it have thought proper to content themselves with an appearance of submission.

Liberty and property are sacred in Bissenpore. Robbery either public or private, is never heard of. As soon as any stranger enters the territory he comes under

the protection of the laws, which provide for his security. He is furnished with guides at free cost, who conduct him from place to place, and are answerable for his persons and effects. When he changes his conductors, the new ones deliver to those they relieve an attestation of their conduct, which is registered and afterwards sent to the Raja. All the time he remains in the country he is maintained and conveyed with his merchandise, at the expense of the state, unless he desires leave to stay longer than three days in the same place. In that case he is obliged to defray his own expenses, unless he is detained by any disorder, or other unavoidable accident. This beneficence to strangers is the consequence of the warmth with which the citizens enter into each other's interests. They are so far from being guilty of an injury to each other, that whoever finds a purse or other thing of value, hangs it upon the first tree he meets with, and informs the nearest guard, who gives notice of it to the public by beat of drum. These maxims of probity are so generally received, that they direct even the operations of Government. Out of between seven and eight millions (about 330,000 l. on an average) it annually receives, without injury to agriculture or trade, what is not wanted to supply the unavoidable expenses of the state, is laid out in improvements. The Raja is enabled to engage in these humane employments, as he pays the Moguls only what tribute, and at what times, he thinks proper.

But a still greater authority, Mr. Holwell, who was Governor of Calcutta, speaks in the same way of Bishnu-

pur in his "Interesting Historical Events," which was printed in 1765:—

To the west of Burdwan, something northerly lie the lands belonging to the family of Raja Gopal Singh, of the Rajpoot Bramin tribe; they possess an extent of sixteen days travel, this district produces an annual revenue of between thirty and forty lac; but from the happiness of his situation he is perhaps the most independant Raja of Indostan, having it always in his power to overflow his country, and drown any enemy that comes against him; as happened at the beginning of Sujah Khan's Government, who sent a strong body of horse to reduce him, these he suffered to advance far into his country, then opening the dams of the rivers destroyed them to a man; this action deterred any subsequent attempts to reduce him, but if the frontiers of the district were so invested, as to prevent the exit of the merchandize of his country, which might easily be done he would be presently brought to obedience, and glad to compound for a tribute of twenty lac per annum; as it is, he can hardly be said to acknowledge any allegiance to the Mogul or Subah, he some years deigns to send to the Subah an acknowledgment by way of salaamy (or present) of Rs. 15,000; sometimes Rs. 20,000 and some years not anything at all, as he happens to be disposed.

But in truth, it would be almost cruelty to molest these happy people, for in this district, are the only vestiges of the beauty, purity, regularity, equity and strictness of the ancient Indostan Government. Here

the property as well as the liberty of the people are inviolate, here no robberies are heard of, either private or public; the traveller either with or without merchandise, on his entering this district, becomes the immediate care of Government, which allots him guards without any expense, to conduct him from stage to stage, and these are accountable for the safety and accommodation of his person and effects. At the end of the first stage he is delivered over with certain benevolent formalities to the guards of the next, who after interrogating the traveller, as to the usage he had received in his journey, dismisses the first guard with a written certificate of their behaviour and a receipt for the traveller and his effects which certificate and receipt are returnable to the commanding officer of the first stage, who registers the same, and regularly reports it to the Rajah.

In this form the traveller is passed through the country, and if he only passes, he is not suffered to be at any expense for food, accommodation or carriage for his merchandize or baggage; but it is otherwise, if he is permitted to make any residence in one place above three days, unless occasioned by sickness or any unavoidable accident. If anything is lost in this district, for instance a bag of money or other valuable, the person who finds it, hangs it upon the next tree, and gives notice to the nearest chowkey or place of guard, the officer of which orders immediate publication of the same by beat of tomtom or drum.

There are in this precinct, no less than three hundred

and sixty considerable Pagodas, or place of public worship, erected by the Rajah, and his ancestors. The worship of the cow is here carried to so great an extreme, that, if that animal meets with a violent death, the city or village to which it belonged, go to a general mourning and fast, for three days and are obliged from the Rajah to the meanest of the people, to remain on the spot, where they first heard the publication of the accident; and are employed during that space in performing various expiations, as directed in the Shastra; but more of this under a subsequent general head.

Bissunpore the capital, and chief residence of the Rajah, and which gives a name to the whole district, is also the chief seat of trade; and produce of the country of Sal timbers (a wood equal in quality to the best of oak) dammer laccas, an inferior sortment of raw silk, and coposs, and grain sufficient only for their consumption; it is from this district that the East India Companies are chiefly supplied with the article of shell lacca.—pages 197—200, Part I.

APPENDIX III.

Extracts from Madan Mohan Bāhdana an Historical poem composed more than hundred years ago and still sung by the local Vaishnavas with the burden “ঐ রূপ রো'য়ে রো'য়ে মনে পড়ে হে” :—

A.

Madan Mohan brought to Bishnupur—

বৈষ্ণনাথ বক্তেশ্বর আদি তীর্থ স্থান ।
ভূমি রাজা বীরভূমে করিল প্রস্থান ।
কিছু দিন বীরভূমে থাকি নৃপমনি ।
শুনিলেন একদিন শঙ্খ ঘণ্টা ধ্বনি ।
সেই গ্রামে ছিল এক ধরণী ব্রাহ্মণ ।
ছিলেন তাঁহার ঘরে মদনমোহন ।
গলবস্ত্র হয়ে রাজা দর্শন করিল ।
বন্ধিম স্মৃঠাম দেখি মোহিত হইল ।
অনিমিষে দেখে নৃপমনি স্বর্ণকাস্তি ।
লক্ষ চন্দ্রোদয় যেন হলো হেন ভাস্তি ।
রাজা বলে দ্বিজ তোমায় করি দিবেদন ।
ঠাকুরের কিবা নাম করাও শ্রবণ ।
ব্রাহ্মণ বলেন শুন করি নিবেদন ।
সন্ন্যাসীর ঠাকুর নাম “মদনমোহন ।”
সাপ্তাহ্যে প্রণমি রাজা গমন করিলা ।
মদনমোহন বলে ডাকিতে লাগিলা ।
একদিন মল্লরাজ মন্দির ভিতরে ।
“দেখা দাও প্রভু” বলে কাল্পে উচ্চৈশ্বরে ।

অন্তর্যামী প্রভু তাহা মনেতে জানিলা ।
 রাত্রিকালে শ্রীরাধারে বলিতে লাগিলা ।
 শুন শুন শ্রীরাধিক আমার বচন ।
 মল্লরাজী ডাকে ঐ বাইব এখন ।
 প্যারী বলে প্রাণনাথ এ কেমন কথা ।
 তুমি বাবে দেশান্তরে আমি থাকি কোথা ।
 প্রভু বলে প্যারী ইথে না হইবে আন ।
 দৌহে গেলে দ্বিজবর হারাবে পরান ।
 এই বলি চলিলেন মদন মোহন ।
 যথা রাজা পালকে নিদ্রায় অচেতন ।
 কৃষ্ণ অঙ্গ গন্ধ পেয়ে নিদ্রা ভেঙ্গে গেল ।
 লক্ষ চন্দ্র জ্যোতি রাজা শিররে দেখিল ।
 রাজা বলে কেবা তুমি নাম নাহি জানি ।
 মদন মোহন বলেন স্মধুর বাণী ।
 শুন রাজা আমি সেই মদন মোহন ।
 গোপনে রাখহ মোরে করিয়ে ষতন ।
 শুনি রাজা ভুলে গেল মনের সব ব্যথা ।
 গোপনে রাখিব কিস্তি এ কেমন কথা ।
 মদন মোহন বলেন বলিরে বচন ।
 আসিবে খুঁজিঁতে মোরে ত্বরায় ব্রাহ্মণ ।
 যেদিন তোমায় দ্বিজ সমর্পিয়ে দিবে ।
 মদন মোহন তবে তোমার হইবে ।
 এত বলি রাজা তারে লুকায়ে রাখিল ।
 কাণাকাণি হরে গ্রামে প্রচার হইল ।
 হেথায় ব্রাহ্মণ প্রাতে গাত্ৰোত্থান করি ।
 মদন মোহন নাম পুনঃ পুনঃ স্মরি ॥

পুষ্প সাজি লয়ে দ্বিজ বাহিরে চলিল ।
 নানাবিধ ফুল ফুল চরন করিল ।
 গৃহে ফিরি মন্দিরের চারিদিকে চায় ।
 ত্রিকুণ্ডের অঙ্গ গন্ধ সে দিন না পায় ॥
 কপাট খুলিয়া দেখে মন্দির ভিতরে ।
 একা রাখা পড়ে আছে পালক উপরে ॥
 উঠেঃস্বরে কেন্দ্রে বলে সকলই রয়েছে ।
 প্রভু মোর রাজে কোথা পলায়ে গিয়েছে ॥
 সেবা পূজা ব্রাহ্মণের পড়িয়া রহিলা ।
 মদন মোহন ব'লে বেকলো কান্দিয়া ॥
 হু চারি রাজার রাজ্য করি পর্যটন ।
 দেখিতে না পায় দ্বিজ মদন মোহন ॥
 খুঁজিতে খুঁজিতে দ্বিজ এলো বিষ্ণুপুরে ।
 ভিক্ষাচ্ছলে ভ্রমরে চিনিতে কেহ নারে ॥
 অনশনে যায় দিন খোঁজ নাহি পায় ।
 জলে ঝাঁপ দিব বলে মনেতে ধৈর্য্য ॥
 এই স্থির করি প্রাণের উত্তরেতে যায় ।
 গ্রাম প্রান্তে বিড়াই নদী দেখিবারে পায় ॥
 বলে এই গঙ্গা ইথে ঝাঁপ আমি দিব ।
 মরিলে হেথায় আমি প্রভুরে পাইব ॥
 এই বলি নদী কূলে গমন করিলা ।
 সহরের বুজা এক জল আনিতে গেলা ॥
 শুনি দ্বিজ বাক্য, বলে, কি কাজ করিবে ।
 ধর্মরাজ্যে আজ বৃষ্টি ব্রহ্মবধ হ'বে ॥
 ত্যজনা ত্যজনা প্রাণ করহে প্রবণ ।
 দেখ যেন নাহি শুনে আর কোন জন ॥

কোথা হ'তে বিগ্রহ এক এসেছে পলায়ে ।
 রাজা অন্তঃপুরে তাঁরে রখেছে লুকায়ৈ ॥
 দ্বিজ বলে শুন মীতা বলি তব ঠাই ।
 মদনমোহন সেই আর মরুব নাই ॥
 জল লয়ে নারী গৃহে গমন করিল ।
 নিজা নাই ব্রাহ্মণের প্রভাত হইল ॥
 প্রাতঃকালে গেল দ্বিজ রাজার হজুরে ।
 দাঁড়ায় জয়ন্ত বলে আশীর্ব্বাদ করে ॥
 জিজ্ঞাসে ব্রাহ্মণে বল চাই কিবা ধন ।
 আনিয়া দিতেছি আমি করহ গ্রহণ ॥
 দ্বিজ বলে ধনে মোর নাহি প্রয়োজন ।
 দেখায়ে বাঁচাও মোরে মদনমোহন ॥
 রাজা বলে ঠাকুর গো করি নিবেদন ।
 পেয়েছি বিগ্রহ এক করাব দর্শন ।
 এত শুনি দ্বিজবর হরষিত মনে ।
 দেখিব বলিয়ে থাকে মদন মোহনে ॥
 পুলকিত হয়ে দ্বিজ বাহিরে আসিল ।
 পাত্র মিত্র লয়ে রাজা ভাবিতে লাগিল ॥
 পুরোহিত বলে রাজা চিন্তা কি কারন ।
 এইরূপ মূর্ত্তি এক করাও গঠন ॥
 কারীকরগণে রাজা যথা আদেশিল ।
 সেইরূপ মূর্ত্তি এক নির্মাণ করিল ॥
 মন্দিরে আনাইয়া প্রাণ প্রতিষ্ঠা করিল ।
 রাধাকান্ত নাম রাজা রাখিতে বলিল ॥
 তিন দিন পরে রাজা ডাকান ব্রাহ্মণে ।
 দ্বিজ উপনীত হৈল হরষিত মনে ॥

রাজা মনে ভাবি স্বিজে করিবারে শাস্ত ।
 দেখান হুঁলীনা করে সেই রাধাকান্ত ॥
 আপাদ মস্তক স্বিজন নয়নেহরিল ।
 "এত নয়" বলে স্বিজ কান্দিতে লাগিল ॥
 ব্রাহ্মণের মনোহুঃখ স্বিগুন বাড়িল ।
 জলন্ত অনলে যেন যুত ঢালি দিল ॥
 বাহিরে আইল স্বিজ কান্দিয়া কান্দিয়া ।
 মৃগযীর সম্মুখেতে রহিল পড়িয়া ॥
 অনাহারে সাত দিন যাপিল ব্রাহ্মণ ।
 তখন চিন্তিত প্রভু মদনমোহন ॥
 পুত্র স্নেহে আমারে যে ব্রাহ্মণ পালিল ।
 অন্তকালে ব্রাহ্মণেরে দেখা দিতে হ'ল ॥
 দ্বিতীয় প্রহর রাত্রি হইল যখন ।
 রুণু ঝুঁ রুণু ঝুঁ হইল নিশ্বন ।
 শুনিয়ে ব্রাহ্মণ তবে হুপূরের ধ্বনি ।
 চারিদিকে চায় যেন মণি হারা ফণী ॥
 অন্তরে বুঝিল এই মদন মোহন ।
 দয়া করে এসেছেন দিতে দরশন ॥
 স্বিজ বলে এলে কি বাপ মদন মোহন ।
 কেন মোরে কান্দালি না দিলে দরশন ॥
 কি কঠিন প্রাণ তব বুঝিতে পারি না ।
 অন্তর্যামী হয়ে এত দিলিরে যাতনা ॥
 আমার হৃদশা এই দেখিলি আপনি ।
 ঘরে পড়ে আছে তোমার দুঃখিনী জননী ॥
 শেষ দিন বুঝি আজ জীবনের তার ।
 তোমা বিনে, সে জীবন ধরিবে না আর ॥

বলেন গুনগো পিতা বলি তব ঠাই ।
 তোমাদের ভক্তি আমি কত্ব ভুলব নাই ।
 ব্রাহ্মণ বলেন গুন মদনমোহন ।
 তোম মুখ দেখে মোর থাকরে জীবন ।
 গুনিয়া বলেন কেন ত্যজিব জীবনে ।
 ঘরে গিয়া রহ পিতা হরষিত মনে ।
 যদিও রাজ্য কৃপা করি হেথা রব ।
 কিন্তু প্রতিদিন আমি দেখা দিতে যাব ।
 প্রতিদিন প্যারীজীর পালকে বসিয়া ।
 আমলী ফুলের কাঁটি আসিব রাখিয়া ।
 এত বলি অন্তর্ভ্যান মদনমোহন ।
 বিরল মন্দিরে গিয়া রহেন তখন ।
 নৃপতির মন রাত্রিকালে ফিরে গেল ।
 ছড়িদার পাঠাইয়া দ্বিজে আনাইল ।
 বলেন ব্রাহ্মণে এসে করি নিবেদন ।
 চল মদনমোহন করাব দর্শন ।
 অল্পমতিক্রমে প্রভুর বারাম হইল ।
 দ্বিজ লয়ে মহারাজা গমন করিল ।
 হা কিবা অপরূপ বিগ্রহ গঠন ।
 একদৃষ্টে দেখে আর ফিরে না নয়ন ।
 ধূলায় লোটায়ে দৌহে প্রণাম করিল ।
 ব্রাহ্মণ প্রভুর কাছে গিয়া দাঁড়াইল ।
 বলে তুমি আমার সেই মদনমোহন ।
 গ্রাত্তের স্তম্ভে তোরে চিনেছি এখন ।
 ছিলিবে দুঃখীর ঘরে এলি রাজ্যের পাশ ।
 চালচলন ফিরে গেল পেয়ে এলে বাস ।

ছিলরে তোর শিরে বাধা শিখি-পুচ্ছ-চূড়া ।
 কোমরেণ্ডে আঁটা ছিল নীলাশ্বরী ধড়া ।
 পিতলে বাধান বাঁশী ছিল, তোর হাতে ।
 মধুর স্বরে রাধা রাধা বলিত তাহাজে ।
 পায়ে ছিল কাকরপোয়া কাঁসার নুপুর ।
 বাজিতরে কণু বৃহু কত সুরমধুর ।
 কৈ সেই চূড়া ধড়া কৈ মোহন বাঁশী ।
 এ বেশ ত নয় বাহা দেখতে ভালবাসি ।
 পরেছ সোণার চূড়া ময়ূরপুচ্ছ পাশে ।
 সাধ মিটিল রটে কিন্তু নড়ে না বাতাসে ।
 সাক্ষা কাজের ধৃতি আঁটা ছেড়ে নীলাশ্বর ।
 কে বলবে সেজেছে ভাল ওরে নটবর ।
 হাতে ছিল রাধা নামের সাধা বাঁশের বাঁশী ।
 বাজিলে রাধার মন হইত উদাসী ।
 মাণিক কেড়ে দিয়ে হাতে লাড়ু ভুয়া বাজী ।
 সূচতুর রাজা তোরে করিলেন রাজি ।
 জানিবে তোর ধারা তোরে বলা কেবল বুধা ।
 মা-বাপে কান্দান তোর চিরকালের প্রথা ।
 আমরা না হয় পর তোর দেবকীয় কি হ'ল ।
 কংসের হাতে কিনা কষ্ট পেয়েছিল বল ।
 বসুদেবের হৃদিশা আর বল্ব কিরে তোরে ।
 মাতা পিতার এত কষ্ট কেবা সহ করে ॥

অন্ধ হলো কেন্দ্রে তোর তরে ।

হা কৃষ্ণ ! হা কৃষ্ণ ! বলে নন্দরাজা মরে ॥
 তাই বলি তোরে যেবা পুঞ্জভাবে লয় ।
 হা কৃষ্ণ ! হা কৃষ্ণ ! বলি তারে মরতে হয় ॥

মল্লরাজের সময় ভাল হইলে সদয় ।
 সময় গেলে কবে তারে দেখে কাঁদতে হয় ॥
 থাক বাছা স্মৃতি থাক চলিলাম ঘরে ।
 গন্ধাক্ষ ঝাপ দিব দৌহে তব নাম করে ॥

B.

The Stone Chariot of Madan Mohan.

রাজা রঘুনাথ সিংহ কুতূহল মনে ।
 ডাকাইল সহরের কারীকরগণে ॥
 আদেশ দিলেন সবে অতীব স্বরিতে ।
 তের চুড়া রথ এক পাথরে গঠিতে ॥
 রাজার আদেশ পেয়ে কারীকরগণ ।
 করিল পাথরে এক রথের গঠন ॥
 রথযাত্রা কালে রাজা হরষিত মনে ।
 রথেতে বারাম দিয়া মদনমোহন ॥
 আদেশ দিলেন সবে রথে দিতে টান ।
 নড়ে না সে রথ রাজা করে আনচান ॥
 মাল্লুষে হলো না বলে ডাকি কতোয়ালে ।
 ষোলহাতী ষোল ঘোড়া লাগাইতে বলে ॥
 কতোয়াল হাতী ঘোড়া লাগাইল তায় ।
 তখাচ চলে নু রথ কাছি ছিঁড়ে হায় ॥
 রাজা বলে কেন হেন হইল ঘটনা ।
 গড়ের চারিদিকে দাও এখনি ঘোষণা ॥
 যদি কোন ভক্ত পঁহুছিতে নাহি পারে ।
 চতুর্দোল করি গিয়া আনহ তাহারে ॥
 এত বলি স্বরিতে যতেক লোক ধায় ।
 মুণ্ডমালার ঘাটে কেহ দেখিবারে পায় ॥

বীরসিদ্ধা হতে এক অতি বৃদ্ধা নারী ।
 প্রভুরে লেখিবে রথে এই আশা করি ॥
 আসিতে আসিতে পথে প্রতি ক্লান্ত হয়ে ।
 পারে না চলিতে ব'লে রয়েছে পড়িল ॥
 চতুর্দোলে উঠাইয়া লইল তাহারে ।
 চলে তরাষিত হয়ে রাজার গোচরে ॥
 রথেতে প্রভুরে বৃদ্ধা কৈল দরশন ।
 সামান্য চানেতে রথ চলিল তখন ॥
 এই বিকূপুর হলো স্বর্ণলকা পুরী ।
 হইল প্রভুর নাম চারিদিকে জারী ॥
 এই বিকূপুর হইল গুপ্ত বৃন্দাবন ।
 বিরাজেন বখা প্রভু মদনমোহন ॥

C.

The Mahrattas driven away by Madan Mohan.

ভাস্কর নামে বর্গি গড় করি আক্রমণ ।
 মনে কৈল লুণ্ঠি এই গুপ্ত বৃন্দাবন ॥
 মূর্খিদাবাদ ঢাকা লুণ্ঠে এলো বিকূপুরে ।
 দেবখাত গড়ে প্রবেশিতে নাহি পারে ॥
 আসি বেলা দ্বি-প্রহরে সুগুমার ঘাটে ।
 কামান সাজান দেখি পড়িল শঙ্কটে ॥
 কিন্তু গোলন্দাজ কেহ নাহি ছিল তথা ।
 দেখে, বলে লুণ্ঠি গড় আর বার কোথা ॥
 খানা পার হইতে সবে হইল বন্দবানু ।
 সেই ঘাটের গোলন্দাজ পাইল সন্ধান ॥
 দেখে প্রায় বর্গি খানা পারে উঠে এল ।
 ক্রতবেগে অগ্নি লয়ে কামানেতে দিল ॥

হুচারি কামান দাগে মুক্তার উপরে ।
 উপরে বার গোলা কিছু করিতে পিপারে ।
 ইহা দেখি গোলন্দাজ গমন করিল ।
 দক্ষিণভঙ্গে মহারাজার সব নিবেশিল ॥
 বলে মন মহারাজ বসে করেন কি ।
 গড়ে বগি প্রবেশিল বলতে এসেছি ।
 রাজা বলে শুন বাছা বলিয়ে বচন ।
 আত্ম কি আর আছে, আছেন মদনমোহন ॥
 সখরে ঘোষণা দাঁও প্রতি ঘরে ঘরে ।
 হরিনাম সঙ্গীর্ভন করুক উচ্চৈঃস্বরে ॥
 হস্ত হইতে অস্ত্র রাজা হুয়ে নিক্ষেপিল ।
 “হরি হরি বল” বলে নাচিতে লাগিল ॥
 বাইশ হাজার সেনা অস্ত্র ত্যাগ করি ।
 উচ্চরোলে বলিতে লাগিল হরি হরি ॥
 মহাপ্রভুর শ্রীমন্দিরে করে হরিনামনি ।
 বলে, রাখ ওহে দয়াময় শুনমণি ॥
 ভকত বৎসল প্রভু জানিল অন্তরে ।
 রাজা প্রজা দিলে তার বগি ভাড়াবারে ॥
 দেখিতে দেখিতে অমনি ধূলি উড়াইয়া ।
 ঘোড়া এক জোড়ে বার বড়বাজার দিয়া ॥
 * * * * *
 নিজ গড় রাখলে নিজে মদনমোহন ।
 অপার মহিমা তব কে বুঝিতে পারে ।
 চতুর্দুর্গ অসমর্থ বাহা বর্ষিবারে ।

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